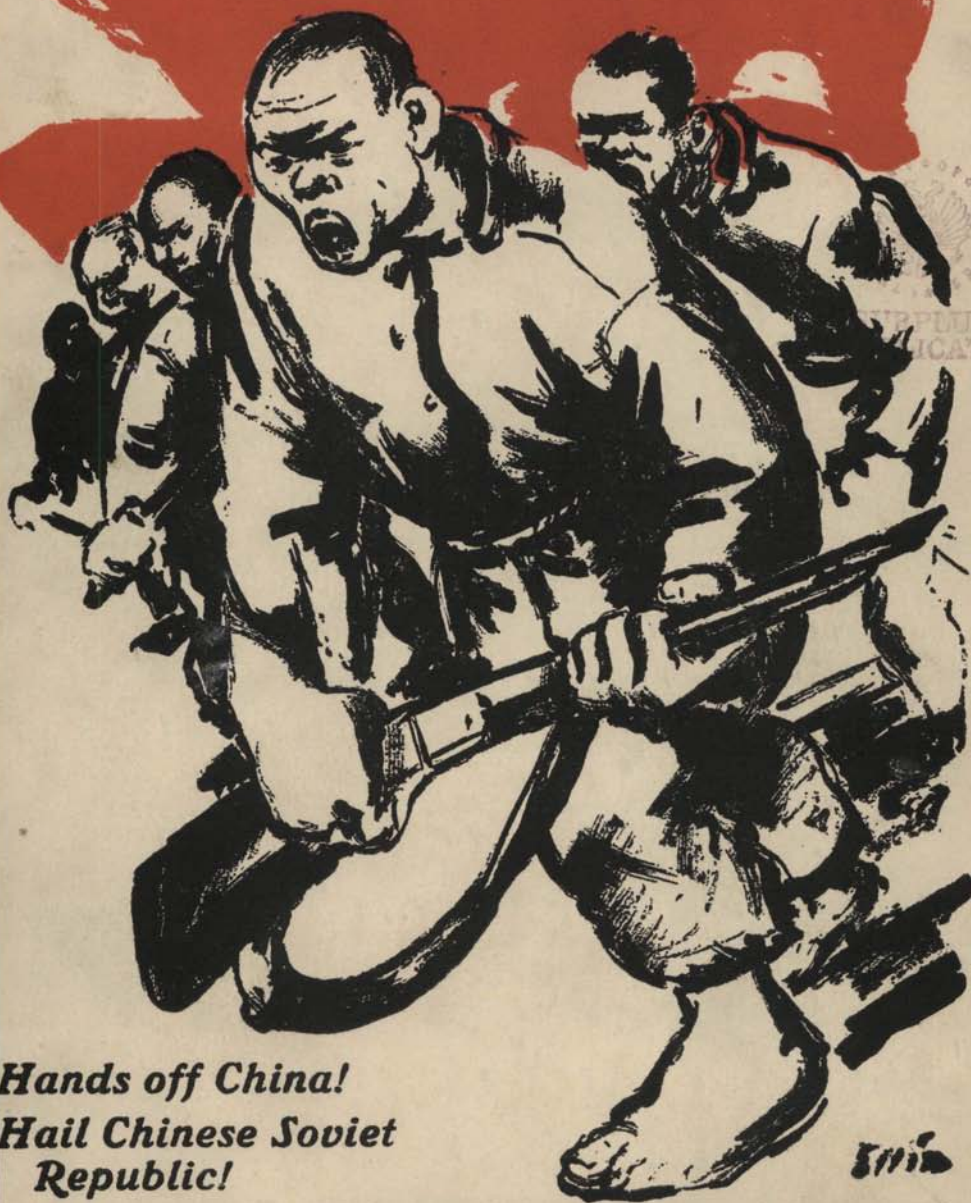


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# THE COMMUNIST



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**AUGUST 1930**

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## Notes of the Month

THE drive of the government against the Communist Party and the revolutionary organizations of the working class has increased tremendously in the last few months. Outstanding of all the anti-labor activities is the present Fish Congressional Investigation. The purpose of the Fish investigation is established by the committee itself. This Congressional committee openly declared that their purpose is to propose to Congress a plan of legislation to "curb the Communists," to declare the Communist Party illegal, to establish an apparatus to smash strikes, to deport all militant foreign-born workers, and enact other legislation laws of this nature. The "labors" of the Fish Congressional Investigation Committee so far has revealed a consistent plan of forgeries directed against the working class of this country and for ideological war mobilization against the Soviet Union.

The famous Amtorg letters which were peddled by Matthew Woll and his fascist Civic Federation and former Commissioner of Police Whalen, were forgeries and no proof was given to the contrary. The Fish Investigation Committee further established that the growing struggles of the American working class, their resistance to the campaign of wage cuts, and the growing influence of the Communist Party is a result of the very existing conditions in the United States and not because of the plots of Moscow. None of these specially prepared and coached witnesses could disprove the fact that the causes for the Passaic strike, for the Gastonia strike, and other struggles led by the Communist Party were the economic conditions of the working class and the intensified exploitation of the capitalists.

In the most glaring terms, the Fish investigation exposed the open strike-breaking activities of the government, the alliance of the government with capitalism in breaking strikes, smashing the revolutionary trade unions and jailing workers for their class activities. The testimony of the Commissioner of "Conciliation," of the U. S. Department of Labor, Mr. Wood, clearly proves that. His greatest achievement, Mr. Wood stated, was that he was instrumental, together with the Police Department in defeating the Independent Shoe Workers Union, a militant trade union organization. Why? Because, Mr. Wood explains, it is impossible to make the Communists compromise on their demands. Which means that the Communists under no circumstances will ever agree to selling out the interests of the workers.

The testimony of the New York Police Department shows the

class role of the judicial apparatus of the bosses. Bluntly the spokesman for the Police Department stated that they do their utmost to prevent a jury trial and always seek a speedy conviction of Communists. Not that we believe that the jury system is "impartial" in the class struggle and not on the side of the bosses. The history of the class struggle in the United States, the Mooney-Billings case, the Gastonia case, and others, really show how the bosses control the juries and the entire judiciary apparatus. The true nature of American democracy now stands exposed in all its nakedness before the entire American working class.

The committee further established the fascist role of the American Federation of Labor. The most vicious was the testimony of President Green and Matthew Woll. Matthew Woll demanded the passing of such anti-labor legislation which even few of the official spokesmen of capitalism dared to propose. In his zealous attack upon the Communist Party and the working class, Matthew Woll did not hesitate even to accuse the government of "sympathizing" with the Soviet Union and reluctance to struggle against the working class. It is this fascist organization which Benjamin Gitlow proposes to "reorganize and reform." It is understood why "the American Federation of Labor is in the forefront fighting the Communists and for the preservation of the present system." The economic crisis and the drive against the workers is continuously undermining the privileged position of the aristocracy of labor organized in the A. F. of L. This trend within the A. F. of L. is growing, and the struggle against the reactionary fascist leadership is increasing. The A. F. of L. leadership sees the ground slipping from under their feet. The only thing which remains for them to do is to intensify the attack upon the workers by attacking the Communists.

The present period marks an increasing wave of terror against the workers. The government is laying the basis for outlawing the Communist Party and thereby defeating the working class.<sup>3</sup> This too has its reasons, which are to be found in the present economic crisis and the growing resistance of the working class, and the beginning of strikes against wage cuts. More than that, the inevitability of war is an established fact. In the transformation of the economic crisis into a political crisis of capitalism, in the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war, the working class will be the determining factor.<sup>4</sup> The force that will lead the working class is the Communist Party. Therefore, in their war preparations, in their attempts to solve their crisis by capitalist means, the bosses and the government must first of all defeat the Communist Party.

**T**HE imperialist war preparations therefore, include struggle against the revolutionary organizations of the working class.

In view of this, August 1st, 1930 is of tremendous political importance. The demonstrations on August 1st against imperialist war, for which we must mobilize the American working class, also serve as demonstrations against the attack of the bosses upon the standard of living of the working class. They will also be expressions of determination on the part of the working class to retain and strengthen their revolutionary organizations. The economic crisis of world capitalism, the sharpening of all inner and outer contradictions of capitalism demand an inevitable re-division of the world, and a revision of the Versailles Treaty. A re-alignment of forces in Europe and America is definitely taking place. The sharpening struggle between France and Italy, between Great Britain and the United States shows that. The debates on the London Treaty in the U. S. Senate clearly show the definite organizational preparations of capitalism for war, and at the same time exposes the true nature of the so-called "peace" treaty. Senator Swanson, defending the London Naval Treaty said:

"From a military and selfish standpoint, the United States cannot afford to reject this treaty."

Senator Robinson, the leader of the Democrats in the U. S. Senate, in defending the treaty which he concluded with MacDonald, stated:

"It is indisputable that the treaty gives the Navy of the United States, a greater relative position with respect to the navies of Great Britain, than it occupied at the time of the conference."

This therefore shows how, under the cover of disarmament and peace, the United States is building up the strongest navy in the world, preparing for the coming war. The same, however, must also be said about the imperialist war preparations of the other countries. As far as the war plans against the Soviet Union are concerned, we must state that the recent developments in strengthening the fascist regimes in Rumania, Finland and Germany, is an organic part of the imperialist war maneuvers. We must also point out here the role of social democracy, serving as the escalator in the consolidation and strengthening of fascism in Europe. It is with the direct help of the Socialist Party of Finland that the fascist attack of the workers is being carried on. It was with the collaboration of the Socialist Party in Rumania that the return of Carol was carried thru and proclaimed by the Rumanian Socialists as an escape from a fascist coup d'etat. And now Germany, where the Socialist Party helped the Bruening Government to carry thru its financial

program by fascist measures and the establishment of a virtual dictatorship the laws for which they themselves prepared. The position of the Socialists on an imperialist war attack upon the Soviet Union was made clear in the manifesto of the Second International to the Russian workers, calling for the overthrow of the Soviet Government and the establishment of a "democracy." Recently, however, one of the outstanding German social democrats, Hoersing, made a speech in which he declared:

"A definite change will take place in the international labor market if Bolshevism is liquidated. The hundreds of millions of peoples of Russia and Asia whom Bolshevism has thrown into a stage of satisfaction with the most primitive existence, into a stage of poverty and want, are the tremendous masses of buyers which world industry is short of. This cannot be changed as long as Bolshevism deprives the world market of hundreds of millions of people."

True enough, capitalism must have new markets in order to prolong its decaying existence.

\* \* \* \*

**T**HE parasitic nature and decaying stage of American capitalism, as pointed out by Lenin, is made particularly clear by the present agricultural crisis in the United States.

"In the United States the economic development of late years has been far quicker than in Germany, and just THANKS TO THIS has brought into high relief the parasitic character of modern American capitalism." (Lenin: Imperialism.)

Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Hyde, stated that there are no prospects for an improvement of the agricultural situation within the United States for the next seven years. In agriculture, American capitalism reached a stage where it is blocking the technical progress. Rationalization and mass production were some of the weapons of American capitalism in the field of world competition, some of its strongest pillars of economic supremacy. In the present period of overproduction the very American methods of rationalization and mass production become factors that not only prevent the capitalist liquidation of the crisis, but on the contrary, accentuate the crisis. The Department of Agriculture, and the Hoover administration now, therefore propose to the American farmers to cut their sowing area of wheat by 20%. The price of wheat today is the lowest within the last sixteen years. The producers of wheat are now selling their products at 64c a bushel, which is close to 20c below the price of production. The fall in prices of agricultural products, however, does not mean that the cost of living is cheaper. On

the contrary, it remains the same, if not higher. The masses do not gain from the fall in prices. It is certainly foolish to presume, as American capitalism does, that the restriction of production of wheat will increase its price. The price of wheat is determined by the world market and not in individual countries. Meanwhile we find a situation where the hundreds of millions of bushels of wheat rot in the grain elevators of the United States and at the same time, millions of workers in this country and the world over are starving. This is a direct outgrowth of capitalist agriculture. It exposes the parasitic and decaying nature of American capitalism. By its example, the Soviet Union shows that only the proletarian revolution can solve the agricultural crisis.

\* \* \* \*

THE crisis is sharpening and deepening not only in agriculture but in capitalist economy as a whole. We are now in a position to review the results of the first six months of the economic life of this country. And what do the results show? The "Annalist" index of business activity shows a decline from 88.2 in May to 86.9 in June. This is very close to the lowest level of the crisis of 1924; and the index of employment for the month of June shows more than a seasonal decline in reaching the level of 90.1, which is much lower than the decline in employment during 1924. Factory pay-rolls declined from 91.8 for May, to 89.6 for June. In its second quarterly review of business conditions in this country, the "Annalist" comes to the conclusion that "Judged on the basis of the typical length of the business cycle, a cyclical up-turn in the business growth prior to the early months of 1931 would be premature." It must also, however, be pointed out that while the possibilities are not excluded for an up-turn in production in certain industries, yet we must definitely discard the idea that it is possible for American capitalism to achieve a new period of prosperity; or that after this cyclical crisis, American capitalism will look the same as prior to the crisis. On the contrary, all capitalist methods of solution of the crisis only further undermine capitalism and lead to a more sharpened and more damaging crisis. While it is clear that capitalist economists are seeking a capitalist solution of the present crisis, we must also, at the same time, recognize the conscious role the working class and the Communist Party will play in determining the outcome of that crisis.

What are the methods capitalism will apply in solving the present crisis? First of all, they now recognize amongst themselves, and definitely admit, that capitalism is in a crisis not only in the U. S.

but the world over. For example, the July 1st letter of the National City Bank of New York, states:

"Business pretty much the world over is sick, and it will serve the cause of revival better to face this fact squarely and with the determination to take all necessary steps to eliminate the obstructive influences, than to cherish a blind optimism as to the date and period of convalescence. . . ."

Increased speedup and rationalization is sweeping the country and affecting every industry. In spite of promises and assertions that wage cuts will not take place, we now learn that the facts are to the contrary. In the manufacturing industry of the United States, a 10% decrease in wages took place and affected 72% of the workers employed.

The increase of exports which was considered as a solution for the economic crisis and a counter-balance to the shrinking home market shows the opposite results. In previous issues of the "Communist" we have given concrete facts of the sharp decline in the foreign trade of the United States for the first five months of this year. The month of June, for which we have not as yet any definite figures, does not show any improvement.

\* \* \* \*

**W**HILE the economic crisis of the capitalist world is sharpening and deepening, the revolutionary struggle in the colonies assuming wider and more serious proportions. The revolutionary struggle in India today shows the correctness of the analysis of the Communist International of the treacherous role of the national bourgeoisie. It is now definitely assumed that Gandhi, the National Congress, and the Indian bourgeoisie will give in and openly capitulate to the British Viceroy and the imperialist Labor Government. The capitalist press in describing developments of the Indian National Congress as exemplified by Mr. Wallabhai Patel, its president, on the eve of his return from prison, states:

"He no longer spoke in terms of war and revolution, which were his favorite phrases before the police descended on Asham by surprise and led him on to Sabaramati jail three months ago. He spoke here in a more considerate tone and merely urged his followers to carry on the national struggle for independence to the last volunteer."

The revolutionary movement for liberation and national independence from British imperialism was augmented by the national liberation struggle in Egypt. Like in India, the imperialist MacDonald Labor Government sent battleships and troops to suppress in blood the struggle of the Egyptian masses against Imperialist

Britain. We can see that British imperialism fully appreciates the great services of the British Labor Government. The diplomatic correspondent of the *London Times* states that the defense of British interests in the Sudan could not have been better protected by a conservative minister.

"The defense of British interests in the Sudan could not have been improved upon by a conservative minister, and in Indian affairs the attitude of the present government satisfies reasonable imperialists."

Not only British imperialists, but world imperialism as a whole is jubilant over the betrayals of the British Labor Government and expresses its approval. The *New York Times* in an editorial of July 14th stated:

"In reviewing the record of the first year of the Labor Government, after more than a year in power the Labor Party has made Socialism in England look more than ever like a policy solely on paper and never to be carried into execution even by a Socialist government."

The lip service used by the Labor Party prior to its election into office, as embodied in the document "Labor and the Nation" which no one took seriously, and considered it as a treacherous document of social imperialism, is found even today to be too radical and is being thrown overboard. The policy of blood and suppression of the British Labor Party is today exposed as the policy of the entire Second International. At the recent session of the executive committee of the Socialist International, MacDonald's imperialist policy was not only approved, but an entire scheme was worked out of how this is to be defended before the workers of the entire world. Like Lord Curzon and Stanley Baldwin, Abramovitch discovered that if England is to exist, it must retain imperialist control over India. He, therefore, laid complete justification for the maintenance of the British imperialist domination in the colonies. Like all the apologists of British imperialism, Abramovitch and the Socialist International advance the argument of the 223 different languages spoken in India, and the many tribes existing in India with antagonistic interests, and the inevitable chaos and ruin that would befall India if British rule would be withdrawn. And finally, Abramovitch comes to the conclusion:

"All statistics prove that the economic, physical, and especially, hygienic conditions of the Indian people have, since British rule, not become worse, but are better than they ever were. Certainly England exploited India, but perhaps not more but much less than the Indian masses were exploited by the desperate half-barbaric

nobles and kings who ruled India before England entered. And so far as development is concerned, beginning with railroads and ending with universities and hospitals, these were inaugurated under British rule in India."

Here we find a complete justification and a clean bill of health for British imperialism in India, using the same arguments traditional imperialists use. The fact of the situation, however, is that the mortality in India is increasing tremendously; even from government sources we learn that the death rate has risen from 24 per 1000 in 1882 to 31 in 1921 and the expectation of life diminished in the same period from 30 to 22 years; that millions of peasants are being pauperized and their income decreasing and 160 million peasants cannot earn even one meal a day; that no industrial development can take place in India as a result of the conscious policy of imperialism in preventing de-colonization of India in order to make super-profits and consolidate its colonial control. President Hoover and Churchill also spoke of the hygienic improvements introduced by civilization into the colonial countries; and the argument that British imperialism is better than the rule of the barbaric princes must be answered with the fact that only because of the support of British imperialism and the British Labor government is the rule of the feudal princes retained. Because of this, therefore, the Second International came to the conclusion that the duty of MacDonald was to protect the interests of British imperialism. Nothing more brazen in socialist imperialist policy was ever expressed in the history of the world's working class.

\* \* \* \*

THE American Socialists who at first became indignant over the bloody rule of MacDonald in India, today too come out as their other brethren of the Second International, in approval of the imperialist colonial regime of the Labor Party. Why? They recognize that the American Socialists are part of the Second International, the Labor Party is the leading Party of the Second International. To attack the Labor Party would be to attack the International as a whole, which would also be a condemnation of themselves as part of this International.

James Oneal, one of the leaders of the American Socialist Party, therefore, correctly stated:

"If those who unreservedly condemn the Labor Government are correct, the condemnation should also apply to the Labor and Socialist Parties who are representing the Labor Socialist International."

Like Abramovitch, Oneal came to the conclusion that

“England depends upon her dominions, crown colonies and other possessions for her continued existence. Her people cannot strive to achieve that if they don't have access to these possessions.”

“No Party can hope for success in Great Britain, whether it be Tories or Labor, that does not squarely face this situation. In this respect Great Britain occupies an exceptional position among the capitalist nations.”

To these words every imperialist of Great Britain will very readily subscribe.

More than that, James Oneal, in advising the treacherous MacDonald what to do in India, definitely states that the Labor Government must not follow any other policy but the policy which it has followed, it cannot help the jailing and clubbing of the working masses striving for their national liberation; and that they shall not recede from this position. Of course, James Oneal advises his colleague, MacDonald, not to hesitate in using any tricks to mislead the masses or enter into a compromise with the national bourgeoisie. He has no objection, James Oneal states, in releasing political prisoners, with the exception of those Communistically inclined. “It (the Labor Government) could have released most of the political prisoners which it inherited from the Tory Government except possibly the few who are Communists and spies.” The Second International and James Oneal call upon MacDonald to keep Communistically inclined political prisoners in jail because they fight against imperialism, the Labor government, and are for national independence. James Oneal and his Second International, however, appeal to the workers of the world to fight for the release of the Mensheviks and social democrats in Russia who were caught with counter-revolutionary activities. The Second International, therefore, is in favor of keeping in jail Communists and revolutionaries but strenuously objects when the Communists, after they take over power, keep in jail counter-revolutionary Mensheviks and social-democrats.

# The Bolshevization of the Communist Party

By EARL BROWDER

OUR Party in the United States has just emerged from its first decisive period of Bolshevization, the period from the Sixth to the Seventh National Conventions (March 1929—June 1930). In this period our Party integrated itself with the world Party, the Communist International; it threw off the elements corrupted by bourgeois ideology (right-wing Lovestoneites, and “left” Trotskyists); it unified its forces and liquidated the long-standing factionalism which had poisoned it for years; and it made a decisive turn toward work among the masses. These were the fundamental achievements of the period closed by the Seventh National Convention. These achievements were made possible by the intervention, help, and leadership of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

## THE SITUATION AT THE SIXTH CONVENTION

To obtain the proper measure of these achievements, it is necessary to recall the situation of the Party at the Sixth Convention. That Convention was sharply divided into two warring factions, both of which had been poisoned by the “prosperity” of American imperialism and by the unprincipled factional struggle. The “majority” group, under the leadership and domination of Lovestone, Pepper, Gitlow and Wolfe, who were acting under the influence of the international Right-wing elements, was mobilized in open struggle against the line of the Comintern. This situation was thus characterized by Comrade Stalin, in his speech before the American Commission (May 6, 1929):

“It has become evident in the discussion that both groups are guilty of the fundamental error of exaggerating the specific features of American capitalism. This exaggeration lies at the root of every opportunist error committed by both the majority and minority group. . . . What are the main defects in the practice of the leaders of the majority and minority? Firstly, that in their day-to-day work they, and particularly the leaders of the majority, are guided by motives of unprincipled factionalism and place the interests of their faction higher than the interests of the Party. Secondly, that both groups and particularly the majority, are so infected by the disease of factionalism that they base their relations with the

Comintern, not on the principle of confidence, but on a policy of rotten diplomacy, a policy of diplomatic intrigue.”

The Executive Committee of the Communist International, on May 18, addressed an open letter to all members of the Party, which thus judged the work of the Sixth National Convention:

“The E.C.C.I. is compelled to record that at the Convention and after it, not only was there no appreciable result achieved in the matter of doing away with factionalism, but on the contrary, the factional struggle has become still more accentuated. Due to the unprincipled factional struggle, the Sixth Convention of the American Communist Party had failed to produce the results which it should have produced in regard to Bolshevization and to the establishment of a healthier condition within the Party.”

After analyzing the opportunist errors of both groups in the Party, the E.C.C.I. Address called upon the Party to carry through an “enlightenment campaign concerning the decisions of the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern” and the various decisions of the E.C.C.I. regarding America. The immediate tasks of the Party were thus stated:

“In the course of this enlightenment campaign, while waging a struggle against all opportunists who want to fight the Comintern, while uniting in that struggle all honest and disciplined comrades who are loyal to the Communist movement, the Communist Party must concentrate its attention on the most important questions of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat in America—on the question of unemployment, struggle for social insurance, wages, working hours, work in the existing trade unions, work for the organization of new unions, struggle against reformism and struggle against the war danger. The C.P.U.S.A. must strengthen its work in regard to recruiting and retaining in its ranks new cadres of workers that are joining the Party, especially of the working youth. It must widen its agitational and organization work in the big plants, in the main branches of industry and among the Negroes, and must secure for the Party an independent leading role in the industrial struggles of the working class that are developing, organizing in the process of the struggle the unorganized workers.”

The response of our Party was immediate. The Central Committee “accepted and endorsed” the Address and set itself to win the entire Party for the Comintern line. By the beginning of October, the Plenum of the Central Committee was able to record its entire success in this task, in the process of which Lovestone, Gitlow, Wolfe, and a total of about 200 followers (mostly petty-bourgeois intellectuals) who fought against the decision, were expelled from the Party. The Party was unified on the line of the Comintern.

## BETWEEN THE OCTOBER AND APRIL PLENUMS

In the October Plenum was registered the immediate beneficial effects of the application of the Comintern line. The Plenum called attention to "the clear outlines of the oncoming economic crisis," and consequent sharpening of class relations, for which it mobilized the Party; the unification of the Party, and the concentration of its forces, was signalized and completed by the drawing into active work and leadership those elements which had been excluded for factional reasons; and the Plenum launched an intensive Recruiting Campaign for new members.

Within a few weeks, the correctness of the perspectives and analysis of the Central Committee was dramatically proved by the stock-market crash and the deep economic crisis which ensued. The renegade Lovestoneites and Trotskyites, whose class treason had already been exposed by their open struggle against the August First demonstration, completed their isolation from the revolutionary movement by their shameful repetition of the formulae of Hoover about the "fundamental soundness" of American capitalism and their open fight against the correct analysis of the Party. The Recruiting Campaign renewed the Party cadres with several thousand fresh proletarian elements to replace those "tired" elements unable to make the turn, and the small group of renegades. The Party plunged into mass work.

The crowning event of this period of the practical turn to the masses, was the gigantic demonstrations all over the United States on March 6th, day of struggle against unemployment. One-and-a-quarter million workers came into the streets at the call of our Party, under the slogans put forward by our Party, in a great demonstration for "Work or Wages" which shook the entire country, forcing for the first time a general public recognition of the depths of the economic crisis and the enormous extent of unemployment. This unprecedented demonstration, which at the same time revealed the fighting mood of the masses, was almost everywhere held under police provocations and suppressions unknown in this country in generations. Literally hundreds of Party leaders and rank and file workers were dragged off to prison by the enraged and frightened capitalists. Our comrades Foster, Minor, Amter, and Raymond were sentenced to three years in prison for leading the great Union Square demonstration in New York, where 110,000 workers elected them as a committee, together with Comrade Leston, to deliver their demands for unemployment insurance to the City Hall.

In the following May Day demonstrations, which were of unprecedented size and militancy throughout the country, approxi-

mately 350,000 workers participated, demonstrating once more that the outpouring on March 6th had been no accident, but that our Party had actually become the recognized leader of the masses thrown into struggle by the sharp blows of the economic crisis. Our Party had made its first serious steps toward becoming a mass Party, leader of the American proletariat.

#### THE SEVENTH NATIONAL CONVENTION

Upon this background our Party approached its Seventh National Convention. In preparation for this Convention, the Central Committee met in the April Plenum, but in no spirit of self-congratulation on its achievements. Our membership had been penetrated with the understanding and spirit of Comrade Stalin's words, when he said:

"The American Communist Party is one of those few Communist Parties in the world upon which history has laid tasks of a decisive character from the point of view of the world revolutionary movement. . . . For that end we must work in order to forge real revolutionary cadres and a real revolutionary leadership of the proletariat, capable of leading the many millions of the American working class towards the revolutionary class struggles. . . . The fight must be intensified for the forging of real revolutionary Party cadres and for the selection of real revolutionary leaders of the Party, of individuals capable of entering the fight and bringing the proletariat with them, individuals who will not fall into panic, but will sail into the face of the storm."

In this spirit the April Plenum sounded the keynote for the Seventh National Convention—the note of searching self-criticism, of frank and candid examination of weaknesses and shortcomings, of establishing the standard of judgment on our work, not on the comparison with the past, but on the contrast between the extremely favorable conditions for our work and the very limited extent of our organizational achievements. The task set by the Seventh Convention was, to overcome the gap between our wide and growing political influence among the masses, and our still narrow and slowly growing organizational strength.

#### THE STRUGGLE ON TWO FRONTS

In the preparation and carrying through of the Seventh Convention, our Party learned in life the meaning of the slogan of "struggle on two fronts" in applying the line of the Comintern, the struggle against Right-wing opportunism and the simultaneous struggle against "leftist" deviations which represent opportunism covered with left phrases. This struggle on two fronts, which had been hitherto expressed only (or mainly) in the simultaneous

struggle against the renegade Lovestone and Cannon groups, now had to be learned in application to Right and "left" deviations or tendencies in the practical work of the movement and in the various formulations brought forward in theoretical discussions of the problems of the Party.

The theoretical struggle for the correct line in the Seventh Convention was, first of all, centered in the estimation of the crisis and its perspectives. While establishing that the economic crisis shows the stabilization of capitalism approaching its end, that it brings close the realization of war, and that it will in many countries be transformed into a political crisis, and that the working class will be more and more unable to find any path except that of revolutionary struggle—at the same time, the Convention had to struggle against the "leftist" conception of the economic crisis as the automatic bearer of revolution, the theory of the "hopeless position" of the bourgeoisie, the "theory of catastrophe." This "leftist" tendency in estimating the crisis and its perspectives, while in words hotly opposed to the Right-wing underestimation of the crisis, leads in practice to exactly the same results, namely, passivity and paralysis of the Party, failure to mobilize and lead the workers in their practical every-day struggles which are the necessary basis for the future higher development of the struggle. High-sounding revolutionary phrases used as a screen or excuse for passivity, for pulling away from the difficult mass work, constitute nothing but opportunism with a "left" mask.

It is precisely this "leftism" which is the chief obstacle in the overcoming and liquidation of the Right danger, which remains as before the main danger to the revolutionary movement. The expressions of both these dangers noted in the Convention itself, were liquidated in the course of discussion insofar as differences of opinion in the Convention were concerned, but both dangers, Right and "left," remain before the Party in its practical work. The struggle on two fronts remains the directing slogan for the Party in determining its political line and practice. The Seventh Convention took this slogan from the realm of abstractions, and concretized it for the entire Party, giving practical examples of its application.

#### MOBILIZING THE NEGROES

The Seventh Convention marked a new period in our work among the Negro masses. Where at the Sixth Convention, our Party was even fighting against the correct Comintern line on Negro work, was distributing the opportunist pamphlet of Pepper on this question, and had hardly 50 Negro members in the Party, a sharp turn was registered at the Seventh Convention. Now our Party has

begun to apply the Comintern line, adopted at the Sixth World Congress, and the fruits of this were shown at the Convention in the presence of a score of Negro delegates (17%), while in the Party more than a thousand new members had been recruited, of whom a considerable number have become active Party workers. Immediately after the Party convention, we witnessed the presence of 173 Negro delegates in the Chicago Unemployed Convention of July 4th, testifying to the mass nature of the contacts with the Negroes which are being consolidated.

If the application of the Comintern line has shown such good results, however, this could not be credited to the clarity of understanding of the Party as a whole. The Convention report and discussion disclosed a large amount of confusion still prevailing, especially on the question of the slogan of self-determination. Deviations of this question were quite general, both Right and "left," and the whole Convention was not sufficiently keen enough in combatting them, taking too much of a tolerant attitude, as if they were "permissible" variations of opinion.

But such errors as the denial of the validity of the slogan of self-determination, which is the crudest form of the Right-wing deviation, or the opinion that the slogan must be immediately transformed from a propaganda slogan into a slogan of action, which is the "leftist" deviation—such errors endanger the whole line of our work among the Negroes, and it is necessary that the Party shall conduct a sharp struggle on both fronts. It is necessary to become intolerant of such errors, and conduct an energetic ideological campaign to liquidate them.

The Right wing denial of self-determination, as a valid slogan for the Negro masses, rejects the basic conception of the Negroes as an oppressed national minority, and rejects therefore the perspective of the development of a national-revolutionary movement among them based upon the Negro farmers and tenants of the South. Such a view renders impossible our tasks of mobilizing the main masses of the Negro race as allies of the proletarian revolution, on the basis of the struggle against the special exploitation from which they suffer. This deviation attempts to mask itself behind quibbles about the difference between "national minorities" and "racial minorities," claiming that the American Negroes come under the second category but not the first. But when asked what is the social-economic content of the status of "racial minority" as contrasted with "national minority," such comrades find it necessary to retreat still further into the swamp of bourgeois theories of biological categories as social factors.

The "leftist" theory, on the other hand, which maintains that

self-determination is an immediate slogan of action irrespective of the general level of revolutionary development in the entire country, is rooted in the erroneous conception of the South as a colony which can have a revolutionary development independent of that of the country as a whole. The transformation of this slogan into one of action is conditioned upon the maturing of a revolutionary situation for American capitalist society. The South, with all its specific characteristics which includes the semi-slave, semi-feudal remnants of the status of Negroes, remains an integral part of American capitalism, in which there cannot be an independent revolutionary crisis. The "leftist" theory tends to discredit the slogan by running too far ahead of events with it.

The Convention clarified the connection between the self-determination slogan, and the slogan of proletarian revolution. The slogan of self-determination is not put forward as dependent upon the establishment of the Soviet Power; at the same time, however, it is necessary for the Communists, especially the Negro comrades, to explain to the Negro non-Communists that the only reliable fighters for equality and self-determination for the Negro masses are the revolutionary workers led by the Communist Party, and that the only final guarantee of self-determination is the successful proletarian revolution. Only thus can the national liberation movement of the Negroes be linked up with the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. The demand for self-determination by the Negroes becomes a weapon to mobilize most important allies for the proletarian revolution.

#### FOR AN AGRARIAN PROGRAM

A sign of the Bolshevization process in our Party, was the discussion on the agrarian question in the Seventh Convention, on the basis of a draft program which has been before the Party for several months. This is the first really serious attention our Party has given to this fundamental question of proletarian revolution. Our previous neglect was itself one of the signs of the opportunist orientation and leadership of the Party.

No final documents were adopted on this question by the Convention, as it was the opinion that discussion has not yet been sufficiently thorough. But here also we can give the main characteristics of the right and "left" deviations, in theory and practice, as brought out in the Convention discussion.

The Right wing approach to agrarian problems is, first of all, characterized by its ignoring of class divisions on the land itself, treating "farmers" generally as a class, or, in a more disguised form, lumping together all "working" farmers. This is a denial of the

class struggle as it presents itself in life upon the land. The "leftist" conception, which arrives at much the same goal, is to oppose the agrarian proletariat to non-wage working farmers who are all considered as "capitalists." But in the United States, as in Europe, the Leninist categories of "poor, middle, and rich" hold good as the basic lines of class division upon the land, in spite of all opportunist chatter about the "exceptional" position of American agriculture. A Communist program in the U. S. also, must be based upon the theses of the Second World Congress and its elaborations since then, of firm alliance of the proletariat with the poor peasants, the neutralization of the middle peasants, and relentless struggle against the rich peasants who are part of the capitalist class. The first tasks of the Party in agrarian work is the organization and development of the class struggle upon the land.

The next refuge of opportunism in the agrarian question is the theory of the "technical revolution" in agriculture, the theory that finance-capital in its penetration of agriculture performs a progressive role, that agriculture is being "organized." Of course, there is even less basis for this theory—much less—than there is for its father, the theory of "organized capitalism." Especially in agriculture does finance capital disclose its parasitic nature, its role as strangler of technical progress. Especially in agriculture we see emphasized the decadent stage which capitalism has reached. It is not necessary to go to the center of capitalist industry to find the outstanding examples of decay and parasitism; we find this, rather, in the colonies and in agriculture. Finance capital penetrates agriculture to a tremendous extent—but primarily in purely parasitic forms. The overwhelming bulk of farm capital is controlled by banks, trusts, and insurance companies, but mainly in the form of mortgages on individually-owned farms, and of ownership of farms individually operated by tenants. The direct exploitation of the farmers by finance capital is predominantly through interest and rents; finance capital has merged with itself the role of usurer and landlord, and depends mainly upon these pre-capitalist forms of exploitation of the farmers. Indirectly, but even more effectively, finance capital exploits the agrarian population by its monopoly of marketing facilities, of which the mass of farmers has lost all semblance of control.

The general unclarity on this central question of the penetration of finance capital in agriculture, and its role there, is reflected in the fact that even the Peasants International (Krestintern) addressed our Party with a letter in which it takes as its central point the "technical revolution," "tremendous developments of corporation farming," as the forms of "an extreme acceleration of the con-

centration of capital in agriculture." Such a point of view is incorrect, and reflects precisely the conception of finance capital as a progressive force in agriculture. The concentration of capital in agriculture still proceeds predominantly upon the technical basis of the individual producer, the individual tiller of the soil whose "technical revolution" is strictly within the limits of such individual production.

The Seventh Convention laid the basis for a correct general orientation on the agrarian question, and furnished the first practical approaches to the application of a correct Bolshevik line.

#### THE CENTRAL WEAKNESS OF OUR MOVEMENT

With the solution of the basic problems of political line, which the Seventh Convention recorded, there emerged into the forefront of our attention for the next period a new set of problems and a new kind of weaknesses for the Party to overcome. Now we find the basic problem of the Party, in the gap which exists between our rapidly growing mass influence on the one hand, and our very slowly growing organizational basis on the other hand.

This contradiction, this chasm, faces the Party with enormous dangers also to its political line. Such a condition is a breeding ground for political deviations, and a correct political line cannot be executed unless the Party and the revolutionary mass organizations find the road to successful building of organizations sufficient breadth to give a solid, permanent base for Party leadership of the masses.

Especially is this weakness to be seen in the trade union work, above all in the slow growth of the revolutionary trade unions in membership, although there is a tremendous extension of their influence. It is seen also in the weak condition of the work within the reactionary trade unions. It is also shown by the almost complete absence of systematic Party fraction work within the mass organizations.

The Seventh Convention placed this problem in the very center of attention. The building of the revolutionary trade unions was declared to be the first order of business of our Party. This task was emphasized not only from its organizational angles, but above all, it was shown that all political advances of the Party demand the execution of this task as a fundamental pre-condition.

But the Convention displayed its most serious weakness in its lack of sufficient practical use of the Convention itself as the starting point of overcoming this weakness. Theoretically, the problem was stated and answered, but the Convention, in its discussions, did not show sufficiently that the Party as a whole is really setting itself

in a practical way to the solution of this problem of mass organization. In this regard, the Convention must be judged as entirely inadequate.

Our task is the winning of the majority of the working class. But this slogan becomes only the most vulgar boasting, if we are unable even to win 50,000 new members to the revolutionary unions. The fact that this goal, set for the Trade Union Unity League and its affiliated unions, has been realized only 20 per cent, is a sign not that the goal was set too big, but that we have failed so far to mobilize our forces properly.

Foremost of all tasks set by the Seventh Convention is this: the overcoming of our organizational weaknesses, the consolidation and extension of our mass influence by crystalizing it into organization. Our Convention, with the help of the Comintern, laid a solid political foundation for the solution of this task. Now we must all go to work.



# Against Bourgeois-Liberal Distortions of Leninism on the Negro Question in the United States

By HARRY HAYWOOD

**B**EFORE the Fourth Congress the bourgeois formula "race question" found general acceptance in the Party as a definition of the Negro question in the United States. The fact that no one questioned the correctness of this formula was itself indicative of the passivity and general lack of clarity in the Party in the field of Negro work. Its utilization not only reflected an incorrect line but also played an active role in hampering a Marxian formulation of the question.

It is quite clear now that after the decisions of the Fourth Congress on the Negro question to consider this question as a "race" question is to underestimate the intrinsic revolutionary strength of the Negro liberation movement, to fail to understand its basis in the final analysis as the struggle of the Negro masses upon the Black Belt for national independence, i.e., for self-determination.

Indeed, this was the essence of the opportunist line of the renegades Pepper and Lovestone, as expressed in the theory of "second industrial revolution in the South," which put forth the perspective of liquidation of the Negro peasantry and hence the social basis of the Negro liberation struggles within the frame-work of the present system. It was no accident that these latter repeatedly emphasized in resolution and speech that the Negro question was a "race" question. Such a definition flowed logically from their opportunist line.

The October resolution of the E.C.C.I. by definitely establishing the Negro question in the United States as a national question, at the same time revealed the bourgeois essence of the formula "race" question. It is therefore but natural that this resolution which laid the basis for a complete turn in Negro work, a decisive break with the opportunist line of the past, should be met by the most desperate resistance on the part of all opportunist elements in the Party. All of these now take up the opportunist chorus; "the Negro question is a race question," seeking in this manner to drag the Party back into the old rut and hamper its orientation upon the new line.

The fact that there exist a "practical" alliance between the

chauvinist elements and some of our Negro comrades, should not be the occasion for wonder. It merely confirms the Bolshevik axiom that there is no difference in substance between open opportunism and opportunism covered by "left" phrases, in this case represented respectively by the chauvinist tendencies among white comrades and the "left" social democratic tendencies among Negroes.

The chauvinist tendencies in the Party are rooted in a deep lack of faith in the Negro masses, a hangover of social democratic and A. F. of L. ideology, which finds its political expression in an under-estimation of the liberation struggles of the Negroes. The proponents of this position consider the Negro movement not as an ally of the proletariat, not as a movement to be utilized in the interest of strengthening the class struggle of the latter, but as a factor detracting from pure proletarian class struggle, as something contradictory to that struggle. They therefore deny the struggles of the Negroes in the name of the proletarian revolution. On the other hand, the "leftism" among Negro comrades is a complete capitulation before the chauvinist position. The comrades representing this position find themselves in the absurd position of trying to fight chauvinism in practice, while at the same time accepting its main theoretical premises. It is clear, therefore, that this "fight" reduces itself to a mere farce.

Comrade Huiswood, in an article entitled "The World Aspects of the Negro Question" appearing in the February *Communist*, gives us an excellent example of this latter tendency. In this article written one year and a half after the Fourth Congress, he not only revives the opportunist formula "race" question, but attempts to give it a theoretical basis. In this manner he places himself in direct opposition to the CI line, giving objective support to the rankest chauvinism. Attempting to prove that the Negro question in the United States is a race question as opposed to a national question, Comrade Huiswood, together with his co-"thinkers" prove instead their absolute desertion of the Marxian-Leninist position on this question and inevitably slide down into the swamp of the most sterile bourgeois liberalism.

#### THE CLASS ESSENCE OF BOURGEOIS RACE THEORIES

It is not by accident that revolutionary Marxism nowhere places the question of an oppressed people, i.e., a social question, as a race question. Race, as a social question, exist only for the ideologists of the bourgeoisie and in the minds of those deluded by them. With these the purely biological category race, based upon differences within the human species, such as color of skin, texture of

hair, etc., acquires a social meaning, i.e., race becomes an explanation of social phenomena. Upon this false premise are reared equally false theories which claim the existence in nature of master and slave races, the former by their "inherent" qualities destined to rule, while the latter because of the absence of these qualities are fitted only for a menial position. The existence of a different level of advancement among peoples, the fact that European nations have reached a higher economic and political stage of development than say, the Africans or Asiatics, is not considered as accidental, i.e., as the result of objective natural and social causes but is attributed to the "natural" superiority of the Europeans. The purely physical concept "race" is identified by these theoreticians with intellectual, moral and cultural traits. White skin becomes the symbol of civilization, high culture and intellectual prowess, while black skin symbolizes barbarity, low morals, dependency, etc. The struggle between the two is regarded as the result of "instinctive," racial antagonisms. It is perfectly logical therefore that in the "interests" of humanity it becomes the duty of master races to watch over these incapables, to shoulder the "white man's burden" and to see to it that they serve society in that capacity, which by virtue of their "natural" shortcomings they are best fitted.

It is clear that behind these theories is concealed the definite class policy of the bourgeois ruling classes, that they are merely a cloak for national oppression. They represent a proper ideological super-structure for a system based upon the super-exploitation of subject peoples, a moral sanction for the prevailing social order.

However, it would be a serious mistake to underestimate the profound social role played by these theories. Arising first as a moral sanction for a national colonial policy, these dogmas become fixed in laws, in turn influence politics and in this manner react again upon the social economic basis, sharpening and deepening the exploitation of subject peoples and perpetuating the existing social relations.

The basic policy of the bourgeoisie of oppressing nations in regard to "subject" peoples is directed towards the arbitrary arresting of the economic and cultural development of the latter as the essential conditions for their least hampered exploitation. This is the real meaning of all national (racial) oppression.

In order to carry through this policy, the ruling classes of the oppressing nations require the utmost isolation of the subject peoples under its denomination, the complete segregation of the masses of their own nation from those of the oppressed. Towards this end they utilize all available circumstances. Differences of race, language and culture become so many advantages in the realization

of this policy. Chauvinist theories are reared up, glorifying the language, culture and race of the oppressing nations and villifying similar qualities and institutions of the oppressed, all of which serve the purpose of cultivating among the masses of the oppressed nations feelings of scorn and hatred for the oppressed, while on the other hand, among the latter sentiments of rancour and distrust in regard to the oppressing peoples as a whole. In this manner they are pitted against each other and the isolation of the masses of the oppressed nations achieved.

Unable to win the masses for its predatory policy by purely ideological means, the ruling classes of the oppressing nations through bribing the upper strata of the petty bourgeoisie and the labor aristocracy with portions of the super profits extracted from the exploitation of subject peoples, creates for itself a social basis among the masses of its own nation. These in turn become interested in the national-colonial policy and serve as the social bearers of chauvinism among the masses and in the labor movement.

Thus in France, the French bourgeoisie utilized the French workers against national minorities represented in this case by the Italian, Spanish and colonial immigrants. In addition to sustained chauvinist propaganda among the French workers, the bourgeoisie plays upon the petty bourgeois moods of the latter. By holding out to them greater opportunities to rise to the position of foremen, labor aristocrats, etc., it succeeds for a time to keep up the bar between them. In this manner the French bourgeoisie are enabled to receive a relative super-profit from the special exploitation of the immigrant workers.

However, the United States offers us the most classic example of this policy. Here the labor aristocrats led by the A. F. of L., fully cognizant of the fact that their privileged position can only be preserved at the price of the exploitation of the split up, unorganized and unqualified workers, composed chiefly of immigrants and Negroes, actively aid the bourgeoisie in perpetuating the position of the latter. This fact was already noted by Engels in a letter to Herman Schlutzer, dated March 30, 1892:

"The working class (the native-born American workers, H. H.) has developed and organized mainly in trade unions. But according to the position it occupies it is an aristocrat, which has the possibility to leave the simple and badly paid occupations for the emigrants. From the emigrants only a small part enter the aristocratic trade unions, they are sub-divided into nationalities, which in the majority of cases do not know the local language. And your bourgeoisie can far better than the Austrian Government incite one nationality against the other, Jews, Italians, Czechs, etc., against Germans, Irish, etc., so that in New York I believe exists such

differences in the standards of life of the workers as would be inconceivable in other countries." (Retranslated from Russian).

To this it is necessary to add that the special exploitation of the foreign born is in general confined to the first generation. The second generation already becomes 100% American, adopting the language and culture of the country. Therefore, the ideological pre-requisites for their further retention as a distinct national minority disappears.

But the greatest advantages in carrying through a national colonial policy exist in those cases where the oppressing nations are distinguished from the oppressed by pronounced physical differences (differences of color, texture of hair, etc.). Such is the case in the United States, Africa and the West Indies. In Africa and the West Indies, this advantage is augmented by territorial separation of oppressed and oppressing and particularly in the case of the African colony by distinct languages, dialects and long-standing national and tribal cultures in marked contrast to the oppressing imperialist nations.

In this respect the position of American Negroes differs from that of the Negroes in West Indies and Africa. Here they are not territorially separated from the oppressing white American nation, but on the contrary, live together with the whites within the confines of one State. Under these conditions the bourgeois ruling classes must pursue the most energetic policy in order to keep up the bar of separation between white and Negroes, i.e., retard the process of assimilation and thus preserve the conditions for the super-exploitation of the latter. This fact, together with the absence of a distinct language, the weakness of national culture among Negroes, has led to a more pronounced emphasis upon the race factor as the only factor upon which the bourgeois ruling classes can erect a hostile ideology directed towards inflaming the "national mind" against them. These are the main causes why in the United States we find the racial factor more emphasized than in Africa or the West Indies.

In addition to the above, racial ideologies have here an older traditional basis than in most countries. The peculiar historical development of American capitalism bound up as it was with the development of cotton production and the necessary utilization of Negro slave labor, contributed to the early rise of racial theories. The moral sanctioning of the brutal system of slavery necessitated the exclusion of the Negro slave from the human category. The race theories of this period were consequently directed towards establishing the Negroes as a sort of sub-human species, who by

virtue of their "inherent" mental incapacity were doomed to eternal slavery.

With the "emancipation" of the slaves and their consequent conversion into semi-slaves on the land and lowest paid wage-slaves, in the cities, these ideologies underwent a corresponding change. The sub-human status occupied by the Negroes in the moral norms of the preceding system became incompatible with their new economic and social status. It became necessary to transfer the Negro from a sub-human type into a human being, but however, of an inferior sort. In the South where the social and economic survivals of slavery are most pronounced, we find also its strongest ideological hangovers. Here the Negro is still regarded as little better than an animal and treated in a corresponding fashion.

The epoch of imperialism or monopolistic capitalism, the political superstructure of which, according to Lenin, "is a return from democracy to political reaction," reflects a similar retrogression in the realms of ideology. In the United States the further fusion of finance capital with remnants of pre-capitalistic form in Southern agriculture, which takes place in this period, is accompanied by a corresponding unity in the field of ideology.

It is therefore not accidental that in the last 2 or 3 decades, i.e., with the development of imperialism in the U. S., we witness a pronounced strengthening of racial ideologies. Within this period the "theoreticians" of race have increased their activities a hundred-fold. Virtual floods of literature on "race questions" have flown from their prolific pens. It is necessary to note however, that these theories have dropped their old primitive trappings and appear now in a pseudo-scientific garb. Dogmas of inferior and superior races are now paraded forth as a scientific fact. Hilferding in his "Finance Capital" correctly notes the tendency of finance capital to prostitute science to its interest on the national question.

"Since the subordination of foreign nations is carried out by force, that is by very natural means, it appears as if the ruling nations owes its domination to special natural qualities, i. e., to its racial peculiarities. Thus the strivings of finance capital for power acquires in the ideology of race the trappings of scientific justification; its actions in this way receive the appearance of being conditioned and rendered necessary by natural science. In place of the ideal of democratic equality there appears the ideal of oligarchic domination." (Retranslated from the Russian.)

It therefore becomes understandable when in the United States we find serious scientists occupying themselves in trying to substantiate the dogma of basic differences between races, by seeking for differences in the bio-chemical composition of the blood of Negroes and whites.

Thus in the United States the race factor appears to dominate in the relation between whites and Negroes. The aggressive nationalism of the American bourgeois ruling classes when directed against the Negroes acquires a racial cloak. American national culture appears as the culture of the white race. Science, art and philosophy receive a racial stamp. American institutions become the white man's institution and are contrasted in a derogatory manner to those of the Negroes. National culture is interpreted as racial culture.

It is quite natural therefore that this tendency would evoke a similar trend among Negroes.

The economic and social strivings of the nascent Negro bourgeoisie and intelligentsia is expressed ideologically in a racial form. The race ideology of the white bourgeoisie becomes opposed by Negro race ideology. Thus, in the last two decades with the growth of a Negro bourgeoisie, all elements of a Negro culture have been created. This culture includes historical background based in part upon ancient African civilization, Negro art and literature reflecting the environment of oppression of the Negroes in the United States, etc. This tendency received its most extreme expression in the Garvey movement with its black gods, black religions, glorification of all things black, etc.

As in all cases of national culture, this tendency among Negroes reveals an attempt of the Negro bourgeoisie to mobilize the masses under its ideological influence in the furtherance of its own class interests.

It is clear from the foregoing that the so-called race question of bourgeois sociologists as it appears both in Africa and in America, consist *in fact* in the *utilization of the physical difference*, i. e., differences in color of skin, texture of hair, etc., *between Negroes and whites by the imperialists for the purpose of facilitating, sharpening and perpetuating the exploitation of the latter.*

#### A MARXIAN-LENINIST FORMULATION OF THE QUESTION

A real Marxian-Leninist formulation of the question will show that the Negro question in the United States, similar to all questions of backward and subject peoples, arises not out of any so-called natural and immutable differences between Negroes and whites, that it is not the results of "instinctive racial hatred," but has its *objective roots* in the difference of economic and cultural development between Negroes and whites under the conditions of a class order of society. This difference far from being due to any "inherent" traits of either, is the result of the fact that owing to certain objective social causes, the white peoples in Europe and

America were able to reach a higher stage of economic and political organization than the Negroes in Africa. This fact, together with the culmination of a series of economic and social circumstances, the growth of merchant capitalism and the slave trade, the necessity of utilizing cheap slave labor in the development of a new continent—created the basis for the enslavement of the Negro peoples. Therefore, under the class system of society in the United States, the difference between backward and advanced peoples becomes converted into a contradiction between oppressed and oppressing peoples.

However, the socio-economic content of the Negro question changes in accordance with definite stages in the development of capitalism in the U. S. During the period of slavery, the Negro question was a slave question, a struggle between Negro slaves and white slave-masters. With the “emancipation” of the slaves, the consequent development of the Negro peoples in a capitalist environment and the growth of class differentiation among them, the Negro question takes the form of a national question. The socio-economic content of the contemporary Negro question in the U. S., consists on the one hand in the efforts of the imperialists through national oppression to violently retard the economic and cultural development of the Negroes, to perpetuate the semi-slave form of exploitation in Southern agriculture and hence the basis of super-exploitation of the Negro workers all over the country; and on the other hand, in the struggle of the Negro masses, against national oppression, for equality which latter can only be realized through revolutionary struggle for the right to national self-determination of the Negroes on the Black Belt.

Race as a category of national science, i.e., a super-historical concept, exerts no influence upon the social development of people in contemporary class society. The efforts of the bourgeois theoreticians of “race” to artificially transplant a category of natural science into the realm of social phenomena is merely an attempt to furnish a “scientific” pretext for a national colonial policy. But, false race ideologies thus created play an important role. These facilitate the isolation and segregation of the masses of the oppressed nation from those of the oppression, thus making possible the retention of the economic and cultural backwardness of the former and in this manner facilitates their super-exploitation. Thus race ideologies give the bourgeoisie of the oppressing nation the possibility of deepening and perpetuating the national oppression of weaker peoples.

Imperialism as a system which draws its main struggle from the super-exploitation and oppression of backward and weaker peoples, must inevitably utilize every advantage which would serve to prolong those conditions of its existence. External physical differences between oppressing and oppressed peoples are utilized by the imperialists in a similar manner as differences in language, religion, etc. For example, the national policy of American imperialism in relation to the Negroes, seeks its sanction in dogmas of inferior and superior races. By virtue of this, national ideology of the American bourgeoisie when directed against the Negroes appears as racial ideology, national antagonisms appear as racial antagonisms. Conflicts breaking out upon this basis are called "race" riots, "race" wars, etc.

It is therefore quite evident, that race as an ideology plays a big role in the national oppression of the Negroes in the U. S. Regarded in this sense it must be said that race becomes a factor in the national question.

But it would be absolutely erroneous, on the basis of this, to ascribe to what is in fact an ideology the importance of a social question in itself. To do so would be equivalent to reducing the national question to one of its factors. Concretely it would be tantamount to reducing the Negro question, a social question, to a question of race-ideology, i.e., to blur over the economic and social roots of this question, and finally to a capitulation before bourgeois race theories.

Precisely in this consists the basic methodological error of those comrades who maintain that the Negro question in the U. S. is a "race question" as opposed to a national question. Confused by the prominence of the race factor in the relations between Negroes and whites, these comrades believe that these relations cannot be explained on the basis of Marxian-Leninist theory on the national question. To consider this question a national question would be, according to them, to "simplify" the question. Therefore, they feel it necessary to make some "improvements" on the teachings of Marx and Lenin on the question of oppressed peoples and to set up a new category, the conception of "race" as a "social" question. In this manner they follow in the wake of bourgeois ideologies who attempt to transplant the biological concept race into the sphere of social phenomena, and inevitably end in reducing the Negro question to an ideological factor. Those comrades who magnify the role of the "race" factor in the relations between Negroes and whites in the U. S. must inevitably arrive at a practical agreement with the liberals who regard the Negro question not as basically a socio-economic question, having its ob-

jective roots in the economic and cultural disparity between Negroes and whites under the conditions of a class order of society, but as a question which arises as the result of the "inherent evilness" of human nature to be overcome through proper education!

HOW THE COMMUNIST ADHERENTS OF "RACE" THEORIES REDUCE  
THE NEGRO LIBERATION MOVEMENT TO A FEEBLE BOURGEOIS  
OPPOSITION

Politically in the contention that the Negro question is a "race" question is contained a deep under-estimation of the powerful economic and social forces lying at the basis of the Negro movement and consequently an under-estimation of the revolutionary potentialities of that movement.

This fact is quite clearly revealed in all the writings of the exponents of this viewpoint. For example, in the above mentioned article Comrade Huiswood departing from this scientifically untenable premise attempts to substantiate his position by creating non-existent differences between the position of Negroes in Africa and the West Indies on the one hand and of those in the U.S.A. on the other. He says:

"It is essential that we *distinguish* the situation of the Negro masses in the colonies—Africa and the West Indies; the semi-colonies, Haiti and Liberia, who suffer from colonial *exploitation* from that of the Negroes in America, a *racial minority* subject to racial persecution and exploitation." (???)

"We must take into consideration the *national colonial character* of the Negro question in Africa and the West Indies and the *racial character* (?) of this question in the United States." (Emphasis mine, H. H.)

In spite of his confused terminology, it is quite evident that Comrade Huiswood wishes to contend that there exists a fundamental difference in character between the exploitation and oppression of the Negroes in the United States and those in Africa and the West Indies. Let us examine the facts: We have already indicated that the colonial policy of imperialism is directed towards retarding economic developments of subject peoples as the best condition for the extraction of super profits. Therefore it is obvious that colonial exploitation can have no other meaning than just this extraction of super profits, which in turn can only be carried out through political oppression, i.e., through national, or as Comrade Huiswood prefers, "racial persecution." The question is naturally raised, does Comrade Huiswood infer that American imperialism derives no super-profits from the exploitation of the Negroes in the U. S.? One has only to take into consideration the position of the Negro peasantry, the difference between the average

wages of white and black workers, the number of white skilled workers in proportion to skilled workers among Negroes, to arrive at an idea of the enormous super-profits derived from the exploitation of the Negro toilers in the U. S. What then is the meaning of Comrade Huiswood's vivid description of the miserable conditions of the Negroes, low wages, peonage and share-cropping, etc., if they do not point precisely to this fact. If the foregoing is true, i.e., if considerable super-profits are derived from the exploitation of Negroes in the U. S., then it is clear that the character of their exploitation as well as their oppression does not differ from the character of exploitation and oppression of the Negroes in Africa or the West Indies. The Negroes in the United States are an oppressed national minority, i.e., an "internal colony" of American imperialism. To assume that there is a difference in character between the exploitation of national minorities and colonial peoples is to fail to understand the teachings of Lenin on the national-colonial question. The fact that the exploitation varies in degree—e.g., the Negroes in the U. S. are not as intensely exploited as for instance the Negroes in Congo—is due mainly to differences in cultural and economic development between the Negro populations in the two countries and not in the character of their exploitation. Therefore, to insist that the Negroes in the U. S. are not subjected to exploitation of a colonial character is to "forget" about share-cropping and peonage in the South, the miserable conditions of the Negro workers all over the country and to play into the hands of bourgeois reaction.

Thus we see that the attempt of Comrade Huiswood to prove his thesis that the Negro question in the U. S. is a "race" question inevitably results in the elimination of the very basis of the Negro liberation movement. It is not remarkable therefore that Comrade Huiswood arrives at the quite consistent conclusion that "it's only distinctive feature (the Negro question, H. H.) is its racial origin"(!!).

Is it not obvious that any imperialist interested in covering up the economic and class roots of the Negro question would agree with such a formulation?

We will not dwell in detail upon the other glaring errors contained in Comrade Huiswood's article, e.g., his total misunderstanding of the characteristics of a nation among which he includes "majority of population and organized communes," (!!) whatever this may mean; or his complete blurring over the peasant question, behind which is revealed the old opportunist Lovestone-Pepper idea of liquidation of the Negro peasantry through migration and industrialization. All this merely shows that Comrade

Huiswood's "world aspects of the Negro question" are different from those of the Comintern.

For a more consistent exposition of the viewpoint which contends that the Negro question in the U. S. is a "race question" as opposed to a national question, we are obliged to turn to Comrade Sheik. Undoubtedly Comrade Sheik in his numerous articles and theses on "race questions" has won the spurs as chief theoretician of this position.

The basic views of this comrade were set forth in an article entitled "To the Question of the Negro Problem in the U. S." (*Revolutionary East*, No. 7, 1929). These views can be reduced to the following basic argument. Says Comrade Sheik:

"We cannot speak about national antagonisms between whites and Negroes in the U. S. in the ordinary sense of that term, because the American Negroes are *not* a nation. Apart from the complete absence among them of a national language, a national culture; in their racial conflicts with the white Americans, *the fundamental economic content and sense of all national antagonisms is absent; the presence of two economic systems standing at different stages in social economic development.*" (Emphasis mine.—H. H.)

Leaving aside for the moment the question of national language and culture, we shall deal first with the most fundamental argument of Comrade Sheik, which is contained in the last sentence. Here Sheik reduces the fundamental question of the economic essence of nationalist movements to the schematic and non-Marxian formula of contradiction between two "economic systems standing at different stages of socio-economic development." Such a formulation of the question is glaringly incorrect from a methodological standpoint. It is difficult to understand how in the epoch of imperialism, one who calls himself a Marxist could speak without qualifications about the "existence of two economic systems standing at different stages in socio-economic development." Still, since Sheik himself does not qualify this statement we would be presumptuous to assume that he means other than what he says. It is obvious, however, that only one who is absolutely incapable of understanding the peculiarities of the present imperialist epoch could speak in such a categorical manner.

Leninism teaches us that the epoch of imperialism or finance capital, among other things, is distinguished by the penetration of capitalist relations into the most remote sections of the earth, and the drawing in of the most backward peoples into the sphere of world market relations, *i.e.* into the general imperialist system. In the colonies or among backward peoples, we are not confronted with two systems standing at different stages in socio-economic develop-

ment, but what we are confronted with is the interweaving of the most varied socio-economic forms—primitive tribal, feudal, slavery, etc. with capitalist relations, all subordinated to finance capital. It is therefore obvious that there is no Chinese wall between socio-economic forms, least of all in the present period. There exists one economic system, imperialism, which inevitably subordinates to itself, preserves and utilizes all pre-capitalistic forms in the plundering and exploitation of subject peoples. Of course there exists difference in the economic and cultural levels between oppressed and oppressing people, but this does not mean, as Sheik obviously implies, a difference between two economic systems.

Regarded in this manner, the socio-economic background of national antagonisms between oppressed and oppressing peoples is not a contradiction arising as the result of two different economic systems, but as a result of differences in economic and cultural levels between oppressed and oppressing peoples which under imperialism becomes a contradiction between finance capital on the one hand, which preserves and utilizes all pre-capitalistic forms in the super-exploitation and oppression of backward peoples, and on the other hand, the independent economic development of these peoples. It is obvious that in precisely this consists the economic content of the antagonisms between Negroes and the whites in the U. S., *i.e.* in the contradiction between finance capital which preserves and utilizes semi-slave forms of exploitation of the Negro masses in Southern agriculture and in this manner preserving the conditions for the super-exploitation of the Negro toilers all over the country, and the economic and cultural development of these latter. The same slave remnants in Southern agriculture are an integral part of imperialism. It is equally obvious that Sheik in denying the existence of national antagonisms among Negroes, denies at the same time the economic content of the Negro question.

It is also necessary to state that Sheik's inference that the Negroes have no special culture is absolutely unfounded. We have already indicated that the Negroes have a culture which reflects their whole historical development as a people in the U. S. And as to separate language (and this is evidently what Sheik means when he speaks about "national language"), this is not one of the prerequisites of the nation. "A common language for every nation is necessary, but a different language for every nation is *not* necessary" (from the pamphlet on *Marxism and the National Question*, Stalin).

Therefore, it is not surprising that Sheik, ignoring the powerful socio-economic factors at the basis of the Negro question in the

U. S. should arrive at a purely subjective definition of the Negro question. For example, he says:

"The race question exists as a *social question* thanks to the *physical differences between peoples* and to the fact that *racial prejudices* arising on this basis are often utilized by the exploiting class for guaranteeing and strengthening their privileged position." (Emphasis mine.—H. H.)

According to this the Negro question does not arise from the difference in the economic and cultural development between Negroes and whites and the policy of American imperialism to perpetuate this disparity, *i.e.* to artificially arrest their economic and cultural development as a condition for the attraction of super-profits, but on the contrary, arises, "thanks to the physical differences between Negroes and whites and prejudices arising on this basis!" In other words, the Negro question is a question of "race prejudices" and "physical differences!" Does this not in reality constitute a complete capitulation before bourgeois race theories and a practical agreement with the Liberals? But we will allow Comrade Sheik himself to draw his own political conclusions. Further he says:

"Not being actually connected by inner ties and separated from the dominating races by anything but *artificial racial divisions* and race oppression arising on this basis, an oppressed racial minority does not necessarily reveal in its ideology those traits which are characteristic for the ideology of oppressing nations. The basic determining traits of this ideology *is not the striving towards separation and independence, but on the contrary, a striving towards intermingling and amalgamation, towards full social equality.*" (Emphasis mine.—H. H.)

Thus, the Negro liberation movement is deprived of all revolutionary content and becomes a struggle for social equality *not* in the revolutionary sense which in the South can only mean independence and the right of self-determination, but social equality in the liberal-reformist conception of that term, *i.e.* a "struggle" against "race prejudices" and "artificial racial divisions." It is clear that only the liberals and reformists counterpose the demand for independence to the demand of social-equality. It is precisely they who foster the illusions that the struggle for social equality is not a struggle directed at the very basis of imperialism, not a struggle, the implications of which are national independence for the Negroes in the Black Belt, but a struggle against the superstructure of racial ideology and race prejudices which they entirely divorce from its economic roots. Consequently, according to them, the objects of this "struggle" can be obtained within the capitalist system without revolutionary strug-

gle. And as we have seen, Sheik's position amounts objectively to this.

#### HOW THE COMMUNIST "THEORETICIANS" OF RACE TURN LENIN INTO A BOURGEOIS LIBERAL

It is quite clear from the foregoing that the mistakes of the Communist exponents of "race theories" are inseparably bound up with and arise out of an anti-Marxist and essentially liberal approach to the national question in general. It is therefore not surprising but on the contrary, perfectly consistent, that this non-Marxian approach is not confined to the national movement of the Negroes in the United States, but to nationalist movements in general. Thus, Comrade Sheik puts forth as one of his strongest theoretical arguments the statement that:

"Among American Negroes there is no developing industrial bourgeoisie, hindered in its economic development the struggle of which (for its free economic development) for the winning of internal markets and for the removal of obstacles standing in the path of economic progress, could give these national movements a progressive character." Further he asks: *"Where then is the need for markets, about which Lenin spoke? Where then is the necessity for the removal of all obstacles?"* (My emphasis, H. H.)

Sheik is evidently under the impression that only the struggle of the industrial bourgeoisie for markets can give nationalist movements a progressive character. If this is so, then not only the movement of the Negroes in the United States, but also those of the Negroes in the greater part of Africa are *not* progressive as an industrial bourgeoisie among Negroes in both the United States and the greater part of Africa is practically non-existent.

It is, however, clear that this contention has nothing in common with Marxism. Sheik in vain refers to Lenin, as Lenin nowhere and at no time reduced the national revolutionary movement to a struggle of the industrial bourgeoisie for markets. On the contrary, Marx, Engels and Lenin at all times considered that the revolutionary strength of bourgeois democratic nationalist movements (even in the classic period of the downfall of feudalism) to lie mainly in the struggle of the peasantry. The peasant basis of the nationalist movements for Marxists has always been the revolutionary basis of the national question, the pre-requisite of the struggle for a revolutionary solution by the lower masses of the questions of overthrow of the yoke of medieval barbarism and the winning of national and political freedom. In this connection, Lenin wrote:

"Typical of the first period (i.e. the classic epoch of the rise of nationalist movements, H. H.) is the awakening of national movements, the rallying to them of the peasantry, the most numerous and most inert section of the population in connection with the political freedom in general and for the right of nationality in particular." (Lenin's Works, Vol. XIX, p. 90).

Thus revolutionary Marxism has always recognized two tactics or, to be more precise, two strategical lines in the process of struggle against national oppression; the line of the popular masses, which is a consistent struggle for the revolutionary solution of a national question and the line of the national bourgeoisie which tends towards conciliation with the forces of reaction and to betrayal of the masses. Any other viewpoint is bound to lead to a Menshevik appraisal of nationalist movements. These two lines become more and more clear in proportion to the development of the class struggle within the oppressed nation with the result that at the present time—the epoch of imperialism—the national bourgeoisie in all the important colonial countries has already deserted the national liberation movement. The national question becomes ever more a question of the peasantry.

Stalin admirably formulates the changes of the national question. In this connection he says:

"This quintessence of the national problem *now* is the struggle of the *popular mass* in the colonies and of the subjugated nationality against finance capitalism, against political enslavement and the cultural retention of these colonies and nationalities by the imperialist bourgeoisie of the ruling nations. *Of what significance can the competitive struggle of the bourgeoisie of the various nationalities be in this formation of the national problem? Of course, not of decisive importance, and in some cases of no importance at all.* It is quite obvious that it is chiefly a question here not as to whether the bourgeoisie of one nationality beats or can beat in the competitive struggle the bourgeoisie of another nationality, but it is rather a matter that the imperialist group of the ruling nationality exploits and oppresses *the basic masses and first of all the peasants* of the colonial and subjugated nationalities and in oppressing and exploiting them, draws them into the struggle against imperialism, making them our allies in the proletarian revolution." (Emphasis mine, H. H. *Bolshevik*, Nos. 11 and 12, 1925; translated from Russian).

This is diametrically opposed to Sheik's contention. The nationalist movements in the imperialist epoch are linked up with the question of socialism over capitalism. The national question is now "essentially a peasant question." "The peasant question lies at the roots of the nationalist question." Sheik eliminates the struggle of the Negro peasantry and therefore deprives the Negro

of a profound revolutionary force and in this manner arrived at a practical agreement with the reformists and liberals.

From the foregoing it is clear that the so-called race question, as conceived by Sheik and others, is nothing more nor less than the same old bourgeois race theory dressed up in a cloak of Marxian terminology and as such represents both from the standpoint of methodology and consequently, in its theoretical and political conclusions, an absolute desertion of revolutionary Marxism for the camp of bourgeois liberalism. Sheik has become entangled in the meshes of bourgeois ideology, namely, because of his inability to understand the national question in the Marxian-Leninist manner.

A concrete historical and economic analysis is the indisputable demand of Marxian theory in the treatment of any social problem. Such a demand applied to the concrete situation of the Negroes in the United States means the treatment of this question within certain historical confines. We must establish the definite historical stage of development through which the Negro people in the United States are passing at the present time.

North America has witnessed two bourgeois revolutions; the War of Independence (1775-81) and the Civil War (1861-65). The first revolution achieved the independence of the colonies from Great Britain. But owing to the weak development of capitalism in the country it could not proceed with any consistency against the pre-capitalist elements. In fact, Northern industry owed its development to slavery. "Without slavery," writes Marx, "North America, the most progressive country in the world, would have been transformed into a patriarchal country." (*Poverty of Philosophy*).

Not until a much later date did slavery become a real obstacle to capitalist development. The contradictions between the two systems did not culminate until the Civil War. The Civil War according to its social and economic contents was a bourgeois revolution, the struggle between slave-holders of the South and the industrial bourgeoisie of the North. It was the struggle of the Northern bourgeoisie for full state power, for the establishing of a capitalist state which would most fully meet the demands of developing capitalism, and for the unification of the country under the domination of the industrial bourgeoisie. This of course meant the overthrow of the power of the slave-holding oligarchy and the destruction of slavery as a system.

In the course of the struggle the slaves were emancipated. The Northern bourgeoisie basing itself upon the freed Negroes and utilizing the latter in the capacity of allies established a revolutionary dictatorship over the conquered territory for the purpose of con-

solidating the gains of the revolution. (Reconstruction Period). In order to strengthen its social base the Negroes were granted full bourgeois democracy—suffrage, right to set in legislature, etc., all of which was constitutionally guaranteed in the enactment of the 13th, 14th and 15th amendment, and in turn backed up by specially mobilized Negro militia and Northern federal troops.

However, the Northern bourgeoisie was incapable of carrying a revolution through to the end. They could not carry through the complete expropriation of the former slave-holders and give the land to the Negroes. It was inevitable that these “rights” of the Negro masses were short lived. These masses were soon deserted by the Northern bourgeoisie, which latter entered into a rapprochement with the dethroned Southern landlords.

The Negroes, dastardly betrayed by their former supporters, poverty stricken and without land were left at the mercy of the reactionary landlords. They were speedily deprived of their newly won political rights and forced back into a semi-serf position upon the land of their former masters.

Thus, the revolution ended in an abortion. Its results may be summed up in the following manner: it destroyed slavery thereby reckoning the basis for the existence of the plantation system in its old form. In this manner it created the conditions for the development of capitalism all over the country. But inasmuch as the abolition of slavery was not accompanied by the division of the land among the Negro masses it led to the establishment in Southern agriculture of the same relationships as followed the overthrow of feudalism in some of the European countries—the semi-feudal system of share-cropping. In this connection Lenin correctly criticized the petty bourgeois economist, Himmel, who contended that the United States had not known feudalism and was unfamiliar with its economic remnants. To this Lenin replied “that the economic remnants of feudalism in no way differed from the economic remnants of slavery and in the form of the slave-owning South, these remnants are very strongly felt up to the present time.” (The development of capitalism in Agriculture in the United States—translated from Russian).

The unfinished agrarian revolution as reflected in the preservation of the remnants of slavery in the economy of the South has its political counterpart in the unfinished bourgeois democratic revolution (as far as the Negroes are concerned) as reflected in the denial of democratic rights to the Negro masses.

From the above analysis it is quite evident that as far as the Negro peoples are concerned the task of the completion of the bourgeois democratic and agrarian revolution *still* stands upon the historical order of the day.

By leaving unsolved the task of the bourgeois democratic and agrarian revolutions, while at the same time making possible the development of class differentiation among Negroes, the Civil War, created the social and economic basis for the Negro and national question which has its objective pre-requisite in the territory of the Black Belt. The struggles of the Negro masses thus become converted from struggles of slaves against slave-holders into struggle of "freed men" against white landlords and capitalists against combined capitalists and semi-slave forms of exploitation and national oppression, for complete bourgeois democracy, i.e., social and political equality, which finds its highest expression in the struggle for self-determination. The Negro toilers, once the allies of the Northern bourgeoisie and betrayed by the latter during the reconstruction period, have now become potential allies of the proletariat.

In the epoch of imperialism the Negroes no longer represent an almost homogeneous undifferentiated peasant mass as was the case immediately after the civil war, but have developed within themselves a comparatively large proletariat, a fairly numerous strata of petty bourgeois and intellectual elements, as well as the beginnings of a small but not yet clearly defined bourgeoisie. This development, taking place in an environment of national oppression, which is greatly intensifying in the epoch of imperialism, strengthens and accentuates the trend on the part of the Negroes for political emancipation.

# The Economic Crisis in Canada and the General Elections

By LESLIE MORRIS

1. The Canadian Communist Party is confronted with the task, at the forthcoming Plenum of the Central Committee, of determining the extent to which the economic crisis in Canada has developed since the Sixth Party Convention, and also the inter-relations of this crisis with the world crisis of capitalism.

The political situation, brought about by the economic crisis on the one hand, and the upsurge of militant resistance to capitalist rationalization by the workers on the other, will have to be clearly formulated in order to determine the strategy and tactics of the Party in the future.

## 2. CANADA AS AN IMPERIALIST COUNTRY

The confusion and the mistakes that have been committed by the Party in its general activities are overshadowed by the rank opportunism that has marked its political estimation of the position occupied by Canada in the epoch of imperialism. The development of this estimation can be divided, for the purposes of clarity, into three categories:

1. The period of the Party's life before the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in 1928, during which Maurice Spector (now a renegade Trotskyist) estimated Canada as a colony of Great Britain. Following from this false premise (which was based upon a total misunderstanding as to the nature of a colony) he formulated the theory that the "Liberal" bourgeoisie of Canada was leading a struggle for "independence" from Great Britain, the "exploiting" imperialist country. Thinking that the constitution adjustments in the relations of Canada with Great Britain made up an "anti-imperialist" movement, he tied the Canadian Party and the working class to the tail of the Canadian capitalist class, and looked to petty-bourgeois liberals for leadership. The concrete expression of this (in reality a denial of the proletarian revolution in Canada) was the demand for Canadian independence, together with agitation for the abolition of the Senate, the abolition of the British North America act, and a series of other bourgeois

democratic demands. This "theory" was shared in by the entire Party leadership.

2. The period following the Sixth Congress of the Comintern up to the Sixth Party Convention, when the theory was evolved that the Canadian bourgeoisie was "hopelessly" involved in the conflict between Great Britain and the U. S. A., and, as a "battleground" between these two imperialist powers had no interests of its own and no firm bourgeoisie. This amounted to saying that Canada was a semi-colony, and to that extent also denied the proletarian revolution in Canada. The revolution in Canada was conceived as being inseparably connected with an "inevitable" civil war in Canada, which would come as the result of the effects of an Anglo-American war upon the bourgeoisie of Canada. This schematic plan was in reality based upon the idea that a revolution can only spring from an imperialist war.

3. The present period, following the receipt of the October third letter of the Comintern, in which the above theory is declared to be a "right wing, social democratic theory." The Comintern position regarding Canada is that, in spite of its peculiarities (upon which no Party can base its political line—see Stalin's speech before the American Commission, May, 1929) Canada must be considered an imperialist country, the bourgeoisie of which pursues a policy of imperialist domination and steers a line definitely in its own interests. The Comintern declares that the revolution in Canada is a proletarian revolution and that the demand for "Canadian independence" is wrong on principle, because it removes the eyes of the Canadian workers from their real enemy, the Canadian capitalists, abroad to America and Britain. The concrete imperialist contradiction in which Canada is enmeshed is the Anglo-American conflict, but to say that (or even hint that) the Canadian revolution is inseparably bound up with a war between Great Britain and America is opportunist and false. Canada does not by any means play a passive role as a victim in this imperialist struggle, but is actively engaged in grabbing after its own share of the spoils. The Canadian bourgeoisie has never and will never play any sort of anti-imperialist part, but is a definitely imperialist bourgeoisie, bound up inextricably with international imperialist contradictions.

The assistance and advice of the Communist International has been received by the Party, and the political line corrected. However, it is not yet clearly understood, but on the contrary, has been resisted by the Party leadership in a whole series of documents that have received the condemnation of the International. It is certain that an intense campaign of enlightenment must begin in the Party

to explain the role of Canada in the light of the Comintern's criticism in order to prevent the opportunist mistakes of the past.

### 3. CANADA'S POSITION IN WORLD ECONOMY

Canada's imperialist character is marked by its dependence upon its exports of capital and goods, inextricably bound up as this is with world capitalist contradictions. Its total volume of foreign trade for the year 1929-30 approximated  $2\frac{1}{2}$  billion dollars, consisting of \$1,120,600,000 exports and \$1,249,763,000 imports, making an adverse trade balance for this fiscal year of \$129,163,000, showing a decided turn from the favorable balance that has existed for the past few years.

Her greatest trade takes place with the U. S. A. both in the realm of imports and exports. The U. S. A. sells more to and buys more from Canada than any other country. Canadian trade with the U. S. A. is favorable to the American bourgeoisie to the extent of over 200 million dollars annually, this sum being made up almost entirely of manufactured commodities.

Canada's best customer for agricultural products (which constitute roughly half of total exports) is Great Britain. As will be seen later, the volume of these exports is declining rapidly, placing the Canadian bourgeoisie in a quandary. Canada's imports from Britain are largely manufactured products, 44.38 per cent of the total imports from Britain in 1927 being textiles and their products. Canada's trade with Great Britain is favorable to Canada, in 1927 imports from Great Britain being 16.0 per cent of Canadian imports, and exports to Great Britain constituting 36.2 per cent of the total.

Roughly one-third of total Canadian exports, including agricultural and industrial products and raw materials are sent to countries other than America or Great Britain, and outside the British Empire. The market for Canadian goods in the Orient has expanded considerably during the past few years.

Canada is the largest single exporter of wheat in the world. The Canadian bourgeoisie depends to a great extent upon the export of wheat to balance its foreign trade. The world's best customer for wheat is Great Britain, which imports about 220,000,000 bushels annually, growing only 50,000,000 at home. Until this year, and especially since the decline of India and the Soviet Union as exporters of wheat, Canada supplied this need, and the drop in British imports of Canadian wheat is perhaps the outstanding single economic happening in Canadian economy for the past year. Wheat draws Canada into the orbit of international competition more than any other of its products.

Canada's position as a wheat exporter and its occupation of the premier position as such (once held by Czarist Russia), does not by any means make it a hinterland, supplying raw materials to an exploiting metropolis and importing finished products in return. An analysis of the trade of Canada and the contradictions between it and Great Britain and America will show this to be so. The international struggle for wheat markets upon a world scale makes Canada, not a helpless producer of raw materials for a grasping "motherland," but a fierce competitor against other wheat exporting countries as Australia and the Argentine, and now also France and Germany (who have both exported wheat into Britain this year!).

American capital continues to pour into Canada; averages during the past five years show a rate of \$186,000,000 a year. However, the outstanding occurrence in the field of foreign investments in Canada is the growing amount of re-purchases made by Canadian financiers of stocks formerly held abroad. In the period from 1923-30 the re-purchase of foreign-owned securities amounted to \$500,000,000, while in 1928 alone they amounted to 253 million dollars. While American capital has relatively increased its holdings in railroads, public securities and pulp and paper, large Canadian investments in metal mining, the gaining of control of thirteen corporations once owned by foreign syndicates, and large purchases in firms like International Nickel, Imperial Tobacco and Noranda Mines show a strengthening of the grip of Canadian capitalists upon industry as a result of their huge capital accumulations during the past few years.

Canada is growing as an exporter of capital. During the past seven years it exported 800 million dollars of capital. A comparative table of these exports and their destinations shows:

#### CANADIAN CAPITAL EXPORTS

(In millions of dollars)

| 1920               |     | 1930          |       |
|--------------------|-----|---------------|-------|
| U. S. A. ....      | 350 | U. S. A. .... | 1,000 |
| Great Britain .... | 250 | Britain ....  | 100   |
| Others ....        | 200 | Others ....   | 700   |
| <hr/>              |     | <hr/>         |       |
| Total .....        | 800 | Total .....   | 1,800 |

"Canada looks upon South America as a favorable field for investment, and during the last year a most striking feature has been the growth of Canadian capital in public utilities and oil fields in South America" (*Royal Bank Letter*, June, 1930). The Royal Bank of Canada, an institution almost entirely Canadian in charac-

ter, is listed as one of the thirteen banks of the world with over one billion dollars in assets.

This shows the imperialist nature of Canadian capitalism and its integral interlocking with the fate of world imperialism. The general crisis of capitalism, and war preparations which are part of it, embraces Canada in its death grip.

#### 4. THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

(a) *In Canada.* A notable feature of the growing economic crisis in Canada, especially sharp since the reverberations of the American stock exchange crash upon Canadian exchanges, is the decline in prices. This is openly admitted by the Canadian bourgeoisie, who remark that it is a "temporary depression," and receive the seconding of the labor imperialists and social-fascists. The following comparative table will show the price decline in its relation to the other two countries with which Canada is most intimately connected:

(Index—1926 : 100)

| <i>Canada</i> | <i>Britain</i> | <i>U.S.A.</i> |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1926—100      | 100            | 100           |
| 1927— 97.6    | 95.2           | 94.2          |
| 1928— 96.4    | 93.8           | 98.2          |
| 1929— 95.4    | 91.5           | 96.3          |
| 1930          |                |               |
| January—95.6  | 91.5           | 96.3          |
| February—94.0 | 85.1           | 92.7          |
| March—91.9    | 82.8           | 90.8          |
| April—91.7    | 82.1           | 90.6          |
| May 15 —      | 80.3           | 88.7          |

(NOTE: *The price decline in Canada during March, April and May reached the lowest point since 1916.*)

The price of copper has fallen from 19.8 cents a pound in April 1929 to 14 cents in April of this year. Lead has fallen from 7.03 cents to 5.4 cents, zinc from 6.63 cents to 4.8 cents, and silver from 55.67 cents per ounce to 42 cents per ounce in the same period. This is especially disastrous in Canada with its tremendous metal mining industry. Newsprint (which constitutes a large portion of Canadian exports to the U. S. A.) has fallen from 3.31 cents in 1928 to 2.75 cents in April, 1930.

The volume of industrial production is steadily decreasing in the main industries, presaging a general reduction. The volume of newsprint production was 10,662 tons less in March, 1930, than in the same month of 1929. The output of automobiles (exported to

Australia and Great Britain) was greater than two years ago, but 50 per cent of the 1929 output. Railways show an 8 per cent decrease in goods carried during the past year, largely accounted for by the wheat situation. The production of pig iron for the first 3 months of 1930 was 14 per cent below the same period in 1929. Bank clearances are consistently decreasing, "indicating quiet business conditions" (*Financial Post*, May 1, 1930). They are as follows:

|                                  |               |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Week ending April 24, 1929 ..... | \$422,992,670 |
| Week ending April 17, 1930 ..... | 406,300,915   |
| Week ending April 24, 1930 ..... | 300,215,543   |

This indicates not only a steady decrease, but also an increasing tempo of reduction.

The agricultural crisis is sharpening the industrial crisis. It is perhaps the most illuminating indicator of the chaos in the country. The price decline in wheat and oats, the two greatest field crops, is extremely sharp. Wheat (No. 1 Northern, which in the average year hardly exists, but which determines the top prices) was \$1.56 a bushel in April, 1928, in April, 1929, \$1.23, and in April, 1930, \$1.09. This cannot be explained by the volume of the crop, but shows a tendency towards increased production resulting in over-production (in the true capitalist sense, in that it is based on the systematic under-consumption of the masses). The carry-over of wheat supplies (*i.e.*, the unsold surplus at the end of each crop year) is tremendous, and confronts the Canadian bourgeoisie with an insurmountable difficulty. The "real" Canadian carry-over (including unsold supplies in U. S. ports, usually ignored by the "statisticians" of the government to make the situation appear more rosy) for the past few years gives an idea of the extent of this over-production:

|            |                    |
|------------|--------------------|
| 1925 ..... | 33,000,000 bushels |
| 1926 ..... | 42,000,000 "       |
| 1927 ..... | 58,000,000 "       |
| 1928 ..... | 93,000,000 "       |
| 1929 ..... | 130,000,000 "      |

This year, due to the decline in exports, the carry-over is larger. This over-production is sharpened by the process of mechanization of agriculture, in which the Canadian bourgeoisie are taking extreme interest because of the effect of wheat exports upon trade balances. According to large-scale farmers, wheat can now be produced upon entirely mechanized farms and sold profitably at a price of 50 cents a bushel, while the cost of production for the present small farmer

fluctuates at around one dollar a bushel. The process of the expropriation of the poor farmers will be quickened; one "bright boy" of the capitalist universities has declared that 150,000 farms will be wiped out by this process. This "expert," Ottewell, says, in part:

"In another generation only 10 per cent of the population of Western Canada will be required upon the land. Farm units will be larger, probably 640 acres at a minimum. (The average western grain farm is now about 340 acres in extent.—L.M.) Machine power will have almost entirely replaced man power. Canadian farmers must bend all their energies to lower production costs or be prepared to lose the market which Canadian wheat has gained, to Russia and the Argentine, which countries are going in intensively for mechanization of farming."

(This gives an inkling of the growth of anti-Soviet propaganda because of the imminent appearance of the U. S. S. R. as a wheat exporter at lower prices.)

Productivity in agriculture is exceeded by industry. Production per man in industry has increased by 50 per cent since 1917. It appears that the Canadian proletariat is now in a process of absolute decline in number. Permanent unemployment is a chronic feature of the present crisis, as a result of the narrowing of markets and increased productive capacities, operating through an intense rationalization. According to the Bank of Commerce there are 250,000 unemployed workers in Canada. This is one-quarter of the entire Canadian industrial proletariat; it does not include part-time workers of course, and there is no means of estimating the undoubtedly huge number of these.

(b) *Foreign Trade.* Exports dropped by \$243,449,000 during the fiscal year ending March, 1930. This drop was mainly accounted for by four items of farm products. They are:

|              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| Wheat .....  | \$212,771,000 |
| Flour .....  | 19,660,000    |
| Cheese ..... | 7,000,000     |
| Meats .....  | 4,150,000     |

Canada in 1920 was an exporter of all principal animal products; in 1930 Canada is importing bacon, butter, mutton and lamb. This year, the first time in forty years, Canada will export no bacon to Britain, which absorbs 900 million pounds of bacon yearly. Canada's trade in live cattle disappeared in 1929. Her butter exports to Britain amounted to \$340 out of a total British import of \$360,000,000 of this commodity. This is largely due to government aided exports of New Zealand, Australia and Denmark. The Argentine is replacing Canada as the larder of Britain, selling in 1929 more

wheat, oats, butter and beef to Britain than did Canada. The British-Argentine reciprocal agreement is responsible for this.

European tariffs against wheat imports have greatly affected Canada. These tariffs, which can be explained largely by the cessation of large scale loans by U. S. bankers to European countries, particularly Germany, during the past year, affecting thereby the ability and willingness of these countries to import heavily, are a recent occurrence. Started by Italy with the Rome conference of 1928, these tariffs have grown until they are: Italy 73½ cents a bushel, and prohibition of exports; France 53 cents, with subsidized exports; Germany (formerly without a tariff on wheat), 78 cents, with exports subsidized. (German wheat was selling within Germany at over \$1.90 a bushel this year, while the world price was a little over one dollar.) Roumania, Switzerland, Portugal and Spain have followed this example.

A frank statement of the Canadian bourgeoisie shows their concern over this state of affairs:

"In the further development of the wheat situation, in the possibilities of creating international complications, Canada has a greater interest than any other country. The U. S. A. is wealthy enough to throw away her foreign trade in wheat, the Argentine might turn cattle loose again upon its wheat acreage, Australia might give her wheat farms over to the sheep, India could adjust her economy to consuming all her production. But it is wheat by which, to a large extent, we live in Canada, and there is no other use to which most of our western farm lands could be put; there is no other occupation available for most of our western farmers than growing wheat for export."

#### 4. THE LIBERAL BUDGET

When the Liberal Budget appeared in May of this year, a storm of protest began. Some critics hailed it as the work of a statesman, others denounced it as a piece of political jugglery. R. B. Bennett (leader of the Tory Party) complained that his thunder had been stolen, thereby admitting the identity of liberalism and toryism. Patrioteers saw the new budget as a means of cementing the cracking walls of empire, and the publicity manager of the United Farmers of Canada declared it to be "the kind of budget we would expect from a government that has no definite economic policy."

A tariff increase here, a decrease there, countervailing duties (in reality retaliatory duties under a nice name) and what not, may seem at first glance to be the handiwork of a government actuated by political expediency. But a closer examination will reveal that the whole fabric is unified by a general class purpose, and that it is precisely because the King government has a "definite economic policy" that the budget presents so many diverse features.

Under the conditions of the economic crisis, the economic policy of the Canadian ruling class has changed. It has done so to conform to new conditions, and to the consequent new requirements of the Canadian capitalist class. The need of the ruling class of this country for a uniform free trade or protective policy no longer exists. The new situation demands an increase here, a decrease there, free trade in certain commodities, a higher tariff on others, countervailing duties and the British preference for imperialist purposes.

For example, one of the great needs of the Canadian capitalist class at the moment is that of reducing the cost of producing wheat. This reduction can only be affected through the rapid mechanization of agriculture, through the introduction of tractors and power-driven implements which will permit the cultivation of larger areas of land with a lesser amount of man power. If the ruling class of Canada are unable to rapidly mechanize Canadian agriculture, Canada will be unable to export the vast quantities of wheat necessary to maintain the Canadian balance of trade. This fact is brought out strikingly in the budget itself, which shows that during the past financial year, when wheat exports dropped to an extremely low level, the Canadian adverse trade balance amounted to over \$129,000,000, all of which was accounted for by the decreased exports of farm produce, chiefly wheat.

This situation is taken care of in the budget, which provides for "Reductions in all rates on tractors valued at more than \$1,400," as well as for free entry for all agricultural machinery from Great Britain. This provision is not made to help all farmers, for thousands of small farmers will be driven off the land they now occupy through mechanization of production. Some of those who are now sufficiently rich to avail themselves of the new machinery will doubtless profit from this clause in the budget, but it was not put there for their protection. It was put there because it is a definite need of the Canadian capitalist class, and particularly the financial interests.

One of the major industries assisted by the budget is iron and steel, the basic industry on which the whole fabric of capitalism rests. This decision was arrived at long before the budget was introduced. On April 17, two weeks before the budget was made public, *The Financial Post* announced in black type on its front page that it would provide for "higher duties on iron and steel to aid Besco (the British Empire Steel Corporation) and the Algoma Steel Co." *The Post* also announced that duties would be reduced on combines and certain other farm implements, and that the British preference would be increased and fruit and vegetables protected.

The financiers decided what they wanted. The Liberal government carried out their wishes to the letter.

Nor did the decision in favor of British preference spring from altruistic motives. It was purely economic in character. The pact between Britain and Argentine had to be taken care of. A market to absorb large quantities of Canadian wheat had to be assured, but this wheat has to be produced at a price that will compare favorably with Argentine wheat. This was taken care of by admitting tractors duty free, and it is hoped that the market for Canadian wheat will be stimulated by British preferential treatment. These preferential tariffs will serve the double purpose of counteracting the pact of last September between the British and Argentine governments, and at the same time stimulate inter-empire trade in the interests of British imperialism and the imperialists of Canada.

The British preference will be given only on certain commodities, and many of these are of a nature that Britain does not export, *e.g.*, fresh vegetables, fruits, poultry feed, butter, etc. In fact, many of these goods are imported into Britain in large amounts, and including them in the free list is more of a gesture than a reality. A number of other goods included in the free list from Britain are ones that cannot be produced in Canada, and therefore their importation is not a menace to Canadian capitalists, *e.g.*, tea. The patriotism of the Canadian bourgeoisie does not extend, for example, to including textiles on the free list, because Canadian textile industries have reached considerable proportions, and require protection.

But the "countervailing" (retaliatory) duties and certain of the commodities which come under the British preferential rates bring out clearly the imperialist policies of the Canadian ruling class. Having become one of the world's leading exporters, Canada is now enmeshed in all the entanglements and struggles of an imperialist country. Her interests are created by conditions in a world market which today is glutted and in a state of chronic crisis. The present "peaceful" period is merely a prelude to the imperialist war now on the horizon. The increase in tariff rates against the U.S.A. and the reduction in favor of Britain is part and parcel of the Anglo-American struggle, a struggle which today is being waged in the markets of the world but which will tomorrow be waged with warships, airplanes and poison gas. Sheltering behind the armed might of British imperialism, the imperialists of Canada are drawn into the market struggle at the moment on the side of Britain, although this is modified by the national interests of the Canadian capitalist class. In the ramifications of this imperialist struggle and the market conditions now existing, lies the explanation for the

“famous” Liberal budget, on the basis of which an election will be “fought” and which the workers and farmers of Canada will be asked to sanction.

#### 5. THE GENERAL ELECTIONS

The general elections at the end of July will witness, in all probability, the return of the Liberal government. The election campaign of both parties is singularly devoid of any issue, which results in a sham “fight” under the rag-and-bob-tail slogans of “protection,” “preference,” low and high tariffs, with unemployment used as the main vote-catching bait. Confronted with the dire need of cheapening production costs and “escaping” from the effects of the sharpening crisis, the two old parties are agreed upon the necessity of carrying through rationalizing measures which will place the burden of the crisis upon the backs of the workers and poor farmers. This latter is the basis upon which they unite, sinking whatever sectional differences they have. This cannot be interpreted as meaning, however, that there are no contradictions within the Canadian bourgeoisie, for to do so would be to deny both the facts and the theory of the class struggle. The outstanding point is that, in the period of general crisis, the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie looms up as the major factor determining the policies of the bourgeois and social-fascist parties. And this is exactly what is happening at the moment.

To do as has been done before in the Party, categorize the Conservatives as the Party of British imperialism and the Liberals as the tool of American imperialism, would be a gross and vulgar tautology that would serve to minimize the contradictions within the Canadian bourgeois system. Both Parties, in spite of differences in their immediate, sectional interests, have, in the period of general crisis, sunk whatever fundamental differences they ever had. This, in the period of sharpened class struggle, is natural; the two-Party system still serves in Canada to cover dictatorship with “democratic” gauze. And, in this regard, the reliance of both of them on the third Party of the bourgeoisie, the social-reformists, is growing.

In their relations both to the U.S.A. and Great Britain, an attitude, narrowly “nationalistic,” of “Canada first” is taken. Inter-empire trade schemes will be entered into only insofar as concrete benefits are received by the Canadian master class; this is openly stated, in different ways, by both Whigs and Tories, but even more blatantly expressed by Woods, prominent Canadian capitalist, at the Empire Chambers of Commerce meeting in London recently. It is in this that the contradictions between the interests of Canada and Britain are clearly outlined: In order to sell its wheat, Canada must

secure Britain as a market, and in order to balance its wheat purchases from Canada and to stimulate a paralyzed industry, Great Britain demands preference over other countries in importing into Canada. But profits are more powerful than blood ties, in spite of the hypocritical appeals to dormant patriotic instincts by the British bourgeoisie, led by Thomas. Canada is opposed to any manufactured imports that will hurt home industry. The absolute fallacy of Empire trade schemes becomes more glaring day by day. Not only does Canada refuse to have this instituted at any expense to its industry, but Australia has just erected the highest tariff walls in the world, and other Dominions follow the same "patriotic" path. The disintegration of the British Empire, and the blank refusal of the Dominions to be "exploited" by Britain for the purpose of extricating her from the morass of crisis was never more openly shown than at the present time.

The sharpening class struggle and the new period of mass proletarian activity that is commencing will find concrete form during the elections through the medium of ten or more Communist candidates. The outstanding features of the election program of the Party will be the call for opposition to the burden of the capitalist crisis being placed upon the shoulders of the toilers of farm and factory. This necessitates a wide agitation for free unemployment insurance, wages increases, the seven-hour day and five-day week, the organization of militant unions among the 700,000 unorganized workers, in conjunction with a mass movement of unemployed workers. The struggle against social-fascism which is rearing its ugly head higher as a result of the crisis, particularly in the struggles of the unemployed for Work or Wages, will be a keynote of the campaign.

The general crisis of capitalism finds full expression in Canada. All empty chatter about "Canadian prosperity" that was rampant in our Party not long since, has been proven to be pure balderdash by the events of the past few months.

The crisis has only begun. It is yet uneven and chronic only in a few industries. The inevitable deepening of the crisis, particularly in agriculture, will produce mass movements upon an unprecedented scale in a short time.

This the Party must prepare for if it is going to merit the name of the "vanguard of the working class."

# The Significance of the Fall in Commodity Prices

By ERIK BERT

ABOUT the year 1925 wholesale commodity prices, as recorded in various price indexes, reached their post-war peak. Since that time the trend, though irregular, has been decidedly downward. The following table illustrates this declining trend from 1925 through the first quarter of 1930.

THE TREND OF WHOLESALE PRICES\*

|                                     |      |      |      |      |      | 1     | 9    | 3    | 0     |       |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|-------|-------|
|                                     |      |      |      |      |      | <hr/> |      |      |       | 1929  |
|                                     | 1925 | 1926 | 1927 | 1928 | 1929 | Jan.  | Feb. | Mar. | April | April |
| United States.                      | 104  | 100  | 95   | 98   | 97   | 93    | 92   | 91   | 91    | 97    |
| Canada . . . . .<br>(base 1926=100) | 103  | 100  | 98   | 96   | 95   | 96    | 94   | 92   | 92    | 94    |
| England . . . . .                   | 159  | 148  | 141  | 140  | 137  | 131   | 128  | 125  | 124   | 139   |
| France . . . . .                    | —    | 695  | 642  | 645  | 627  | 576   | 567  | 558  | 548   | 648   |
| Germany . . . . .                   | 142  | 134  | 138  | 140  | 137  | 132   | 129  | 126  | 127   | 137   |
| Italy . . . . .<br>(base 1913=100)  | 596  | 602  | 495  | 462  | 446  | 417   | 408  | 400  | 396   | 455   |
| Japan . . . . .<br>(base 1900=100)  | 267  | 237  | 225  | 226  | 220  | 201   | 199  | 196  | 193   | 225   |

Two facts must be noted as to the contents of the table. In the first place the indexes are for *all commodities* and the countries concerned are, with the exception of Canada, industrial countries. A comparison of the April, 1930 figures with those for April, 1929 shows that the decline has been particularly sharp during the past

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\*Federal Reserve Bulletin, April, 1930, p. 256; June, 1930, p. 378.

year. In prior years the decline in commodity prices as a general phenomenon had occasioned little discussion among bourgeois writers. The decline during the past year has been noted—at length and with alarm. The economic crisis, of which the decline in commodity prices is one phase, has aroused the bourgeoisie to the importance of this decline\* which has not been uniform for all commodities. Raw materials and foodstuffs have been affected particularly. The slump in rubber, sugar, coffee, silver and others has been spectacular and has consequently been noted more extensively than the declines in other commodities. However, as the following table shows, practically the entire range of basic commodities has participated in the decline. (See table on opposite page.)

Individual bourgeois economists and others have ascribed the drop in commodity prices to an inadequate supply of gold, resulting from the fact that the surplus of production over consumption of this metal during the past several years has not been sufficient for the needs of increasing business activity. The generality of bourgeois writers, however, has stated the cause of the fall in commodity prices to be over-production. The May Letter of the National City Bank, for example, characterizes the price situation as follows:

“What is giving more concern everywhere than anything else is the price situation, which presents a problem arising from over-development of production in the principal commodities of world trade.”

Now that the entire price structure slumps alarmingly, the bourgeoisie finds a glib word and a ready explanation in “over production.” They cannot say much more than that though they clothe it in varied phraseology. An analysis would bring forth the picture of a world capitalism that quivers and crumbles throughout its entire organism.

The disparity between productive capacity and markets is and has been characteristic of the fields of semi-manufactured and

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\*Owen D. Young, for example, stated several months ago that “the proper handling of price stability is one of the most important matters facing the capitalist system today.” (*Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, March 29, 1930, p. 2133.)

## PRICE RECORD OF IMPORTANT COMMODITIES\*

(Relatives 1926=100)

|                      | 1923  | 1924  | 1925  | 1926  | 1927  | 1928  | 1929  | Jan.  | Feb.  | Mar.  | Apr.  | May  |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Nitrate of soda..... | 97.7  | 97.7  | 101.2 | 100.0 | 97.7  | 87.5  | 84.4  | 83.6  | 84.4  | 84.4  | 84.4  | 82.0 |
| Raw sugar .....      | 162.1 | 136.8 | 99.6  | 100.0 | 109.2 | 97.0  | 86.7  | 85.3  | 85.5  | 82.1  | 80.2  | 73.8 |
| Tea .....            | 87.4  | 89.2  | 98.8  | 100.0 | 96.5  | 90.6  | 89.9  | 84.6  | 84.6  | 84.6  | 84.6  | 84.6 |
| Coffee .....         | 62.6  | 91.5  | 110.8 | 100.0 | 80.4  | 90.0  | 86.1  | 50.4  | 51.4  | 50.3  | 48.6  | 50.0 |
| Silk .....           | 138.8 | 102.4 | 106.1 | 100.0 | 87.4  | 81.0  | 79.6  | 74.4  | 73.6  | 72.7  | 69.2  | 66.7 |
| Wool .....           | 116.9 | 117.9 | 131.5 | 100.0 | 98.4  | 108.2 | 96.2  | 80.4  | 75.0  | 71.7  | 69.0  | 67.4 |
| Cotton .....         | 167.1 | 166.4 | 133.6 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 114.3 | 109.3 | 98.6  | 89.3  | 85.7  | 93.6  | 93.6 |
| Rubber, crude .....  | 61.1  | 53.9  | 149.2 | 100.0 | 78.0  | 46.0  | 42.5  | 31.0  | 32.5  | 31.4  | 30.5  | 28.9 |
| Pig tin .....        | 63.3  | 76.8  | 88.6  | 100.0 | 98.3  | 77.1  | 69.1  | 59.5  | 59.2  | 59.5  | 55.0  | 49.0 |
| Silver .....         | 104.6 | 107.7 | 111.4 | 100.0 | 90.9  | 93.8  | 85.5  | 72.6  | 69.7  | 67.1  | 68.4  | 65.7 |
| Aluminum .....       | 94.2  | 100.1 | 100.7 | 100.0 | 94.4  | 88.6  | 88.6  | 88.6  | 88.6  | 88.6  | 88.6  | 88.6 |
| Lead .....           | 89.1  | 98.2  | 108.1 | 100.0 | 79.0  | 74.4  | 79.8  | 73.9  | 73.8  | 67.4  | 65.8  | 65.6 |
| Zinc .....           | 91.4  | 86.2  | 103.9 | 100.0 | 84.8  | 81.8  | 88.1  | 71.1  | 70.2  | 67.0  | 65.7  | 63.1 |
| Copper .....         | 104.8 | 94.4  | 102.6 | 100.0 | 93.8  | 105.5 | 130.8 | 128.3 | 128.3 | 128.3 | 112.9 | 92.0 |
| Wheat .....          | 76.0  | 83.1  | 115.6 | 100.0 | 89.0  | 98.7  | 85.1  | 81.2  | 76.6  | 72.1  | 72.1  | 70.1 |
| Paper pulp .....     | 137.6 | 104.6 | 104.0 | 100.0 | 94.2  | 89.9  | 90.2  | 91.3  | 97.8  | 97.8  | 91.3  | 91.3 |
| Pig iron .....       | 128.8 | 102.4 | 100.8 | 100.0 | 90.8  | 86.6  | 90.3  | 89.1  | 88.3  | 86.9  | 86.8  | 86.2 |

\*This table was prepared from the prices of the commodities contained in Standard Statistics Bulletin Base Book Issue 1930-1931. Relatives were computed (with 1926=100) in order to make the trend more apparent than in the raw price figures. The underlined figure in each series indicates the peak year in the period covered.

manufactured products as well as of raw materials.<sup>1</sup> The fall in the price of raw materials cannot be viewed as an isolated phenomenon. The fall in the all-commodities indexes shows that the stabilization in prices which the bourgeoisie hoped for and thought they had attained was not stability but a certain though irregular recession. This recession has occurred not only in the category of raw materials but in the entire range of prices. The fall in prices is an aspect of the development of the economic crisis.

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<sup>1</sup>The following from the May Letter of the National City Bank is interesting.

"The over-production of the world today is in crude products. Apparently productive capacity is engaged too largely upon these and insufficiently upon the production of the finished goods ready for consumption. It cannot be said that the people have all the goods of the latter class they want. . . .

"It will be said, of course, that slack trade is due to inability on the part of would-be consumers to buy, but since our wants are supplied by a combined system of industry and trade, the purchasing power of consumers exists in their own powers of production, and the latter should set the only limitation upon consumption. In other words, there never would be any unemployment if the industries were in proper relations to each other and trade was functioning properly."

We might well subject this remark to some analysis. It admits over-production in crude products but implies that no such condition exists in the field of "finished goods ready for consumption" which it limits quite arbitrarily to include consumers' goods only. The contradictions in the capitalist system are eliminated with the nonchalance of ignorance by stating blatantly that "the purchasing power of consumers exists in their own powers of production." An illustrious predecessor of the writer of the National City Letter, John Stuart Mill, had already proclaimed in the middle of the last century that "a general over-supply, or excess of all commodities over the demand so far as demand consists in means of payment is thus shown to be an impossibility."

This capitalist "theoretician" admits one contradiction of capitalism—that industries are not "in proper relations to each other"—in order to avoid the other primal contradiction. "The last cause of all real crises always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses as compared to the tendency of capitalist production to develop the productive forces in such a way, that only the absolute power of consumption of the entire society would be their limit." (Marx, *Capital*, v. III, p. 568.)

It certainly is true, as the National City Bank scribbler states, that "It cannot be said that the people have all the . . . finished goods . . . they want." His statement that the reason lies in an over-production of crude products is both stupid and hypocritical.

In the "normal" functioning of the business cycle the prices of raw materials tend to anticipate in trend the prices of manufactured commodities. The present greater severity in the decline of raw materials as compared with manufactured commodities is therefore to be viewed as a typical feature of capitalist crises. The continued though irregular recessions in the prices of the greater part of the basic raw materials during the past several years were indications of the fact that the contemporary level of economic activity was being undermined.<sup>2</sup>

Economic activity in the colonial and semi-colonial countries has been shaken, in particular by the drop in commodity prices. In world capitalist economy, they sell raw materials and foodstuffs to the imperialist countries and purchase primarily manufactured articles. Under "normal" price conditions this trade relation can proceed without serious derangement—other things being equal. The decline in the prices of raw materials has disrupted these trade relations. The price levels of the commodities which they have had to sell—raw materials and food products—have diverged sharply below the price levels of those finished commodities which form the bulk of their imports.

We may clarify the situation somewhat by indicating those abstract theoretical ways in which the present trade disruption between imperialist and colonial and semi-colonial countries might be dissipated. Among these abstract theoretical ways out are increased exports, export of gold, curtailment of imports, and increased foreign borrowing.

In the present crisis not only is there no possibility of increasing the bulk of exports to compensate for lower prices but no accurate estimate can be made as to when the bottom of the decrease in such exports will be reached. The export of gold, on the other hand, is a way out, which, if persisted in, would soon bring about a financial panic in the countries attempting it. Consequently, Argentina, for example, closed its Conversion Office to prevent the export of gold, while Australia and Canada are practically, if not officially, off of the gold standard. If exports remained constant while imports into the colonies and semi-colonies were forcibly reduced, there

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<sup>2</sup>It is not always possible to find statistical evidence of the gradual undermining of the contemporary level of economic activity, or when such statistical evidence is available it describes very inaccurately the degree of this undermining. For example, the National City Letter of June in commenting on the present crisis notes that "industry" has lost "the fine adjustment of relationship which we have seen to be the condition of prosperity." This "fine adjustment of relationship" was no more a fact in the years of "prosperity" which preceded the present crisis than it is at the second time.

would exist a theoretical possibility of a solution. Imports have fallen, however, while exports of raw materials remain constant, and recent tariff legislation in Australia, Canada and elsewhere has added pressure to this decrease. Indeed, the decline in imports has been concurrent with a severe decline in exports. It has been not a solution of the disruption of international trade, but an indication of the severity of the economic crisis in the field of international trade.

The export of capital is the typical feature of imperialism. In the mechanism of finance capital its counterpart is the debtor-creditor relationship of the colonial and semi-colonial countries and the imperialist powers. The interest charges on these debts constitute the surplus value which the imperialists wring from the colonial and semi-colonial masses. The weight of these debt charges becomes the more oppressive to colonial peoples as the price of their commodities declines, since it is by this means that these debt charges are paid. Additional foreign financing, though carrying possibilities of temporary relief insofar as it tends to stabilize foreign exchange, means the necessity of increased exploitation to pay the debt charges on loans.

Foreign loans do not, in any particular, mean a solution of any permanence for the disparity between the volume of production of these raw materials and the world market for them. Such "success" as can be obtained by foreign loans is comprised in the experience of Brazil where foreign loans have been negotiated for the purpose of holding coffee off of the market. The result has been a rapid increase in world production, a year's supply or so stored in Brazil "hanging over the market," in trade jargon, and a precipitous decline in coffee prices. The whole economic life of Brazil has been and remains severely disrupted through this experience.

The trade relations of China and other parts of the Far East with the rest of the world have been dealt a severe blow by the decline in the price of silver which forms the money basis for practically all Chinese commerce. China must now pay its foreign trade balance and the charges on its foreign debts in sharply depreciated silver. The decline in silver differs only in detail from that of other commodities. These details include the fact that silver serves as money in a great part of the Far East and that it is in China where the effects of its drop are most serious, not a raw product but an imported commodity.

No one of the factors noted offers any appreciable alleviation of the disruption of foreign trade. The fall in commodity prices is one of the expressions of the present economic crisis. None of these factors can overcome the basic cause of that crisis, the basic

cause of economic crises in capitalism in general, the tendency of capitalist production to be extended to the limits of the productive forces but in the face of a market constricted by the poverty of the masses to far less than the possibilities of these productive forces.

A counteracting effort is comprised in the formation of cartels, price agreements, etc. The formation of these cartels, etc. is a practical recognition on the part of the capitalist class that "over-production" is the inevitable result of the capacity functioning of its enterprises. Among the producers of nitrates, sugar, coffee, rubber, tin, silver, copper, paper pulp, petroleum, etc. attempts have been made during the past several years, or are being made at present, to restrict production in order to prevent a slump in the price of the commodity or to extort surplus profits by forcing prices up. A review of the history of each effort made would be too extensive for the present discussion. Though all these attempts have not proceeded along exactly the same lines the result has been unequivocal failure to restrict production and maintain prices over a period of years. The disastrous slumps in sugar, coffee, and rubber despite these efforts are notorious. Copper producers were able to maintain prices over a year at the fixed price of 18 cents a pound. Within the past few months copper was cut to 14 cents and then 12½ cents and has since sold as low as 11½ cents a pound. These attempts at control of the market have been of such importance for the areas directly concerned from a general economic point of view that the state has participated actively in their formation and maintenance (i. e. sugar, Cuba; coffee, Brazil, wood-pulp, Canada; rubber, Great Britain; petroleum, United States; nitrates, Chile; etc.). In the United States probably the most important development of this character has been the attempts of the Farm Board to peg wheat and cotton prices.

Thus far the fall of the prices of raw materials and food stuffs has been discussed mainly as affecting directly the colonial and semi-colonial countries. However, the countries of a high degree of capitalist development (Western Europe, U. S. A., Japan) and those of a medium degree of capitalist development (the Balkans, etc.) are affected directly to a very important degree by the fall in such prices. The United States may be taken as an example. The fall in the price of agricultural products accentuates the agricultural crisis in the United States, in Germany, France, the Balkans, etc. In each of these countries agriculture is an integral part of the capitalist economy. The purchasing power of the agrarian masses is of extreme importance in the determination of the extent of the domestic market.

The capitalist class in the United States has recognized the seri-

ousness of the accentuation of the agricultural crisis which has resulted from the fall in the prices of farm products. The Federal Farm Board has entered both the wheat and cotton markets in an attempt to hold up the precipitous decline in the prices of these two most important cash crops. Through the Grain Stabilization Corp. the Farmers National Grain Corp. and other agencies, the Federal Farm Board has extended credit to certain cooperatives to enable them to hold large amounts of both crops or has gone into the market to buy up a substantial part of the crop which has not been disposed of. The accomplishment of the Board's operations include the extension of probably over a hundred million dollars to buy or hold wheat and cotton. A temporary cessation of the decline in the prices of wheat and cotton has been succeeded by further recessions to prices which mean losses for the farmer and which have occurred after the Farm Board has been in the market for months trying to halt the decline. Absolutely no change has been effected in the character of the basic forces which brought about the decline in the prices of wheat, cotton, and other agricultural products. An over-supply of these commodities remains—the masses have not been able and are not able to consume the crops of the past seasons and new crops are coming in which will add to the present glut in the markets of capitalism. The Farm Board and the Canadian wheat pool have shown that government and semi-government agencies can buy up as much of a commodity as they have credit available. They have also showed that the extension of this credit means nothing toward the curtailment of world production.<sup>3</sup>

In the capitalist countries the agricultural crisis means a sharp curtailment of the purchasing power of the agrarian masses and hence a sharp curtailment of the domestic market as a whole. The agricultural crisis tends to accentuate the general crisis.

With slight exceptions retail prices of consumers' goods have not fallen into wholesale prices of semi-manufactured and finished products have not fallen as sharply as have raw materials. This does not indicate the necessity for a revision of the general estimate of the significance of the fall in prices. The automobile industry may be taken as a case in point. There has been as yet no widespread and sharp price cutting in automobiles. It would patently be incorrect to think that there is in the auto industry no disparity between productive capacity and the market. The drop in produc-

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<sup>3</sup>The program of the Farm Board calls for curtailment of production in the United States. This it will strive to accomplish through the weapon of credit which it holds. It cannot mean curtailment of production in the United States. It does mean curtailment of farmers.

tion (which, allowing for increases or decreases of cars on hand, may be taken as indicating the extent of the slump in the market) of over 30 per cent from last year is a general and conservative estimate of the high degree of this disparity in the automobile industry. *The disparity between the productive capacity and the market exists in every industry*, though the reflection of this disparity in falling prices may vary among various commodities. It may be stated in general that the degree of stability (or instability) of the prices of individual commodities at the present time has its basis in the mechanics of price fixing in various industries (price marked articles being reduced with less facility than unmarked articles, etc.), the degree to which the various industries are pressed by over-capacity, and the different rates of decline as among raw materials, semi-finished articles, and finished commodities. It is important that this unevenness within the entire price structure be noted. It is even more important that we understand the fundamental fact that within the entire capitalist economy the gap between the productive forces (less exactly but more colloquially—productive capacity) and the power of consumption of the masses has widened to the extent of a crisis. The crisis has developed and is developing with varying tempo and from different levels in the various countries. It is on this basis that we must consider the present status of the price structure.

The bourgeoisie, supporting its hopes by what instances of a slow-up in the decline of commodity prices it can find, reckons that the worst is over, that we are at or very close to the bottom, and that at the bottom is a good place to be for a revival of business. It is not our purpose to guess at where the bottom is or how long it will take to get there. An appreciation of the fundamental factors affecting the price structure is of more value. There is no substantial evidence for stability in the present price levels.

The economic crisis shows no signs of improvement. Present indications point rather to further recessions in economic activity. At present levels of economic activity there is every probability for a continuance of the downward trend in prices as a phase of the severely sharpened competitive struggle. This sharpened competition will make joint action by the producers of raw materials toward curtailment of production and price fixation appear even more necessary for the maintenance of profits. This sharpened competition will nevertheless make the conclusion and maintenance of such agreements almost impossible. Not only is there to be expected a further decline in prices as the result of the acuteness of competition in the present crisis but the further decline in price levels tends in turn to undermine the current level of economic activity. A re-

ceding price level makes it essential for the capitalists to curtail production to the necessary minimum to avoid inventory losses on raw materials purchased or on finished goods ready for sale.<sup>4</sup>

The effect of further price recessions will continue to be world wide in scope. Further declines in the prices of raw materials will narrow the colonial and semi-colonial markets for the exports of the imperialists. The domestic markets of these imperialists will be narrowed by the recession in the prices of the agricultural products which they produce.

The markets for which the imperialist struggle is being carried on have been sharply curtailed as a result of the crisis. The struggle becomes accentuated directly as these markets become narrower. The accentuation of the imperialist competitive struggle necessitates price cutting to win markets. In the colonial and semi-colonial countries the fall in the prices of the commodities which they produce means privation and misery for millions on millions of workers and peasants. It means far more though. This privation and misery spurs on these masses to greater struggles against imperialism.

The bourgeoisie now proclaims this as its solution of the crisis. *Price cutting at the expense of the working class.* Price cutting through wage cuts and speed-up and unemployment. The sharper the struggles for markets becomes the more intense becomes the antagonism of the world bourgeoisie to the Soviet Union—a vast market that remains closed to its exploitation—and the more rapidly does this bourgeoisie prepared for an attack on the Soviet Union. The upsurge of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples and of the proletariat is the answer of the exploited masses to the capitalist economic crisis, to wage cuts and to the preparations for struggle against the Soviet Union.

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<sup>4</sup>A receding price level is a minor factor in determining the rate of economic activity. The main factor is the purchasing power of the masses. Though a minor factor price recessions assume a substantial importance at the present time and must therefore be noted.

# The Naval Conference and the Crisis of Capitalism

By R. P. DUTT

THE "disarmament" trappings of the Naval Conference have long since passed into the background. In the sharpness of the fight over every weapon, in the intense rivalries revealed and unconcealed war calculations, the tinsel of pacifist talk can no longer be maintained. The Conference is now visible to all as the manoeuvring ground and battleground of the imperialist powers, in which every Power is fighting for its strategic position.

The question now to be considered is, no longer simply the general exposure of the armaments and war preparation character of the Conference under the phrases of disarmament, but the particular role of the Conference in the total line of development and in the general situation. *What is the significance of this stage of imperialist war preparations represented by the London Naval Conference?* Here it is necessary to look at the wider situation.

The twelve years since the war have been characterized by what we speak of as the General Crisis of capitalism, i.e., the culminating stage of imperialism as it is passing into social revolution, the period of "wars and revolutions" already opened by 1914, when (1) the antagonisms of the imperialist system of production have reached an extreme point, with the ever greater growth of monopolies and productive power, and can find no peaceful solution or smooth working; the old "normal" process gives way to a feverish movement and continual partial crisis; (2) the World Revolution has already entered on to the stage as a direct factor, and won a partial victory which it is able to maintain and strengthen; (3) the social contradictions, both in the imperialist countries and the colonies, have reached an extreme point, and bourgeois rule can only be maintained increasingly by extraordinary means (fascism, Labor Governments, special legislation, counter-revolutionary organizations, etc.).

In the sphere of international politics this situation reflects itself in two contrary tendencies:

(1) Imperialist antagonism and the drive to war goes ever more intense; the ceaseless fight of the giant powers for world hegemony replaces the pre-war "balance of power" by a constantly shifting

process of unstable alliances, combinations and maneuverings; but at the same time this precipitate drive to war is complicated and impeded (in the last resort it can be hastened) by the fear of revolution and the necessity of common action against the world revolution.

(2) The drive to common action against the world revolution, as seen to be embodied in the Soviet Union, grows even stronger, as the Soviet Union defeats the hopes of its breakdown and visibly grows in strength; but this drive is in its turn complicated and impeded by inter-imperialist antagonisms.

The interplay of these two conflicting tendencies constitutes the pattern of international political relations since the war, and can be traced through all the successive international maneuverings and conferences.

#### FROM 1919 TO 1930

An interminable series of international conferences has marked the years since the war. This fact is itself an evidence of the sharpening of imperialist antagonisms, and the ever closer growing together of all questions into a single complex. Ever new antagonisms give rise to ever further conferences to solve them, which in turn only bequeath these antagonisms in new and sharpened forms to their successors.

If we examine the series of these conferences we can trace through all of them the two main conflicting tendencies. All these conferences bear the appearance of strivings towards varying forms of imperialist combination and agreement. In the eyes of Social-Democracy and bourgeois capitalism they represent successive attempts or stages towards international unity, or "Ultra-imperialism" towards harmonized international capitalism, towards pacification and stabilization. The reality is different. The reality reveals throughout these conferences: first, the strivings of one or another leading power towards world hegemony; second, the strivings towards common action, but under the hegemony of one or another leading power, against the revolution and the Soviet Union. All these strivings achieve only partial results, and no final or lasting results, because of the intensity of imperialist antagonisms. At each stage war is brought nearer.

If we take a few outstanding points in the process, we see a continuous development.

In 1919, we had in the League of Nations the American project of a League of Capitalism under American hegemony, which would establish American world domination and crush the revolution throughout the world. Alongside of this went the united imperialist

armed war on Russia. The war on Russia failed in the face of the resistance of the workers in Russia and throughout the world. The project of the League broke down on the antagonism of America and Europe; and America withdrew. The League became the field of British-French antagonism and counter-revolutionary maneuvering.

By 1921 the British-American antagonism had become so strong as to lead to the calling of the Washington Conference by America, with the object: first, to cut down British sea-power without a battle; and second, to regulate imperialist action in the Far East, *i.e.*, with regard to the coveted Chinese colonial field and the growing national-revolutionary movement in China, and eventually with regard to the Soviet Union. The Washington Conference also produced no conclusive results. The British-American antagonism continued through other forms, transferred from battleships to cruisers. The imperialist rivalries in China continued, and imperialism could not check the rapid growth of the Chinese Revolution, although subsequently successful in securing the temporary victory of counter-revolution.

In 1922 the Genoa Conference represented the British attempt to establish leadership of the European powers, drawing in Germany and compelling capitulation of the Soviet Union. The attempt broke down in the face of the American opposition, French antagonism and the independent German-Soviet Rapallo Treaty.

By 1923 the anarchy of the international situation had reached such an extreme, with the French invasion of the Ruhr, Britain and France at breaking point, American isolation, and Germany on the eve of the second proletarian revolution, that a desperate combined imperialist attempt had to be made to meet the position, and American hegemony accepted for this purpose. The result was the Dawes Plan, adopted in 1924. On this basis was built up the partial stabilization and reconstruction of capitalism in Europe, with the American moneylenders' aid.

From this point followed the loudly heralded "revival" of capitalism, which the bourgeoisie and Social-Democracy have seen in the Dawes restoration and subsequent rationalization process. But this "revival" meant in fact a very different result from their imaginings. With the advance of technique and productive power, increased competition, and ever new attacks on the workers, it produced inevitably the conditions of the "third period": extreme intensification of imperialist antagonisms and social-contradictions, approach to the new economic crisis now developing, and the growth of the new revolutionary wave in the imperialist countries and the colonies.

This advance of imperialist antagonisms was already visible when British imperialism attempted to utilize the Dawes restoration as a basis, through the subsequent Locarno policy and Chamberlain attempts of 1925-8, to build the united anti-Soviet front. The attempts broke down in the face of the inter-imperialist antagonisms. It was equally visible in the growth of British-American antagonism shown in the breakdown of the Geneva Naval Conference in 1927 and the crisis over the Anglo-French Naval Agreement in 1928.

American active intervention and domination now becomes increasingly evident, with its economic and financial world expansion. This is shown in the Kellogg Pact of 1929 and the Young Plan of the same year. The Young Plan, which revealed sharply all inter-imperialist antagonisms means the closer drawing in of Germany to the "Western" grouping of imperialist powers, especially under American influence, and drawing away from the former orientation towards the Soviet Union. The International Bank, while equally reflecting inter-imperialist antagonisms and growing American influence, also provides further common ground for combined financial action against the Soviet Union.

It is at this point in the line of development that come the Anglo-American negotiations of 1929 and the London Naval Conference of 1930.

The whole process of development up to the Naval Conference, and particularly the process since the opening of the "third period," has shown in an ascending line: first, the increase of imperialist antagonisms, coming out all the more clearly into view in their new forms as the surviving divisions from the last war have passed more into the background; and second, the sharpening of antagonism between imperialism and the Soviet Union, and the increasing gathering of forces against the Soviet Union.

The particular situation in which the Naval Conference meets is characterized by

(1) Intense imperialist antagonisms, more open and warlike in expression than at any time since the last war: the British-American in the front rank, and alongside the British-French, French-Italian, Japanese-American, etc.;

(2) Gathering world economic crisis, centring in America, intensifying the British chronic depression, and with only French for the moment still strong;

(3) Rapid economic advance of the Soviet Union, contrasting with the economic crisis of capitalism;

(4) Growth of the new revolutionary wave in the imperialist countries and the colonies.

These are the conditions that govern the character and outcome of the Naval Conference.

#### THE WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE NAVAL CONFERENCE

The Naval Conference takes place in the midst of a gathering world economic crisis of capitalism. This crisis is the direct outcome of the intense drive to rationalization, amalgamation, speeding up and mass production of the preceding years. For this reason it affects first and foremost the very centre of the capitalist advance and "prosperity," America, spreading from thence in growing circles to the other imperialist countries on the one hand, and to the raw-material producing countries on the other. Overproduction is now the cry on every side; production falls and unemployment rises; and the whole drive becomes to restrict production, to force through new attacks upon the workers, and, above all, to force up exports at all costs.

What are the political consequences of this crisis, and its effects on the conditions of the Naval Conference?

The first effect is to add a still greater intensity to imperialist competition and antagonism. The fight for markets, to win a larger share of world exports, to win monopolist controls of other powers, becomes a life and death struggle. But economic antagonism cannot be accompanied by political harmony. The strategic conflict is only the expression of the total imperialist conflict. Therefore, despite all the pacific expressions, the strategic fight at the Conference is fiercer than ever before and threatens repeatedly to break up the Conference (contrast the relatively smooth and rapid advance of the Washington Conference with the continual deadlocks of the London Conference, even from the very first question of fixing the agenda).

But if the effect is thus to increase imperialist antagonisms to the highest point, what is the possibility of reaching an agreement even of the limited and temporary character that is being sought? Here it is necessary to bring into consideration the other factors of the situation, and especially of the economic crisis.

The second effect of the economic crisis is to make acute the internal economic problem of each country, the problem of the State budget and the financial burden of armaments. "Every country," as McDonald declared in his keynote speech at the outset, "—wealthy and poverty-stricken alike—feels the burden of arms." In every country the problem of balancing the State budget is acute, not least in Britain; even in America the demand, following the economic crisis, is to lessen taxation; and the centre of the budget, and consequently of taxation, is armaments. It becomes a

condition of realizing increased competitive capacity, and thus an essential part of the imperialist antagonism, to lessen State expenditure, but this affects only a small portion; the problem of armaments remains. If it would be possible to fix for a limited period an agreed ratio of armaments building, *without diminishing efficiency*, this would represent the ideal. But this can only be reached by an international agreement even though it is obvious only a temporary agreement between open rivals. And this becomes the keynote of the Conference. The objective is defined, not as to reach any general agreement towards disarmament, but solely to reach an agreed ratio of building in the most costly and possibly less effective form of armaments, warships (leaving untouched air and chemical warfare), for a limited period of five years until 1936. It is obvious that this limited regulation does not mean a harmonizing of imperialist antagonism; on the contrary, the competition within the limits becomes more keen.

This move to a limited truce or short-time regulation is further reinforced by additional factors resulting from the situation and the economic crisis.

The third effect of the economic crisis is to intensify social contradictions and give further impetus to the rising revolutionary wave. In the last resort, a situation of a gathering revolutionary wave and insoluble internal problems can drive a government more hastily to war as the desperate "solution," as was seen in all the leading imperialist countries in 1914. But the first effect is to lead to the preoccupation to concentrate on the home front and internal problems in order to be more strongly prepared for war. The problems of India and of the internal economic situation, rising unemployment and the strike wave, confronts the British Labor Government, and lead to the desire to buy, even at some price, a truce with the American enemy. The American Government is also confronted with the need to concentrate all its forces on its economic problem and unemployment.

Further, the fourth effect of the economic crisis is to intensify the division and contrast between the economic crisis and anarchy of capitalism, and the gigantic planned economic advance of the Soviet Union. Imperialist agitation against the Soviet Union now gathers force in a thousand forms in every country (British Church crusade, Henderson's open playing into the hands of the Conservatives, French Kutepoff campaign for a break, German raids on Soviet institutions, Social-Democratic campaign for a break, and concentration of ships in the Baltic, etc.) Ever more rapid war preparations are evident. If a temporary truce in imperialist antagonisms can be arranged, this is the strongest possible preparation for

war on the Soviet Union. Here we come to the special role of British imperialism in the present stage.

#### THE ROLE OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM AND ANTI-SOVIET CAMPAIGN

British imperialism is throughout the present period the leader of the anti-Soviet campaign of imperialism; first, because British imperialism is still the most widely extended in its world possessions, and therefore the most affected at every part by the menace of the world revolution whose centre and fortress it sees in the Soviet Union; and second, because British imperialism is the declining imperialist power and therefore increasingly concerned, no longer primarily with questions of expansion, but with questions of preventing disintegration and holding back the gathering revolution. British imperialism, therefore, throughout the post-war period sees as its main enemy to be destroyed the Soviet Union; this remains its supreme aim; and changes of government, Conservative, Liberal, and Labor, only mean changes of form and method in realizing the aim.

Under the Conservative Government British imperialism developed to an extreme point *simultaneously* the antagonism to the Soviet Union and the antagonism to America. 1927 saw equally the break with the Soviet Union and the break-up of the Geneva Naval Conference. This endeavor to fight on all fronts at once was the cardinal error of its policy, and led only to deadlock and the final sterility of all the Chamberlain projects.

From this point it was clear to British imperialism that it was necessary to reach some form of temporary truce with America in order to be able to concentrate all forces against the Soviet Union. This change of line was already preparing under the Conservative Government (the projected Baldwin-Hoover meeting), but finally has fallen to the Labor Government to carry out. The Labor Government has in every way *courted* America; the Admiralty has completely abandoned the position that at Geneva it swore to be unchangeable.

This courting of America is carried out under very definite limits (till 1936—after which the Admiralty has already officially announced that it will consider itself free to change its opinions). But the tendency is manifestly the tendency of making concessions and reaching a temporary agreement at all costs.

The question at once arises: What does British imperialism stand to *gain* by this policy of capitulation?

The answer is clear from the situation. First, opportunity to concentrate on its economic position, since it is not at present in a

condition to advance a precipitate war with America, drawing closer the Empire, etc.

Second, and an essential part of the first, to concentrate on the revolutionary danger, and, above all, to have a free hand to carry through the campaign against the Soviet Union with, at any rate, tacit American support.

What is fully clear is the line actually being pursued by the British Government: namely, simultaneously with the approach to a temporary agreement with America, the full unleashing of the anti-Soviet campaign; the resumption of relations in such a form as to point from the outset to a break; and the unconcealed assistance of the Labor Ministers, at the same time as always professing to observe a "correct" attitude, in actually driving forward the campaign.

The campaign against the Soviet Union—this now becomes for imperialism the grand "solution" of the economic crisis. It means not only the overthrow of the fortress of the world revolution; it means not only the overthrow of the economic power which is already proving its near advance towards far outstripping the strength of capitalism; it means at the same time the conquest of that for which capitalism is choking and suffocating, the conquest of a new unlimited market and opportunities of expansion.

All forces gather now ever closer towards the launching of the fight against the Soviet Union. If the Naval Conference is not understood in relation to this situation, it becomes a meaningless shadow, an empty farce. When the rival brigands meet, even with unconcealed hostility and suspicion at the time, to endeavor to draw up a temporary truce, it means, above all, that they have a larger enemy in view. Their mutual hostilities may yet wreck their plans; but we shall do ill to calculate on this for our security.

Imperialism is advancing to war. The London Naval Conference is only a stage and a demonstration of this process. All the signs point that war is increasingly being prepared first and foremost against the Soviet Union. As the economic crisis develops, as each successive partial crisis is only overcome to give way to new and greater crises, war becomes more and more the only "solution" for imperialism from the inextricable tangle of its contradictions and antagonisms.

But this "solution" is in fact, as 1914 showed, no solution. For the imperialists leave one factor out of their calculation—the working class. The war, in which they see the solution of their problems, only hastens the conditions of their destruction. And, above all, if they seek to launch a war against the Soviet Union to crush the world revolution, such a war will and can only mean the gigantic

driving forward of the forces of the world revolution throughout the world in a flood that will engulf them.

The fight against the war plans of imperialism is not only a fight to expose them, and to agitate for preparedness for the struggle against the coming war. It is, above all, a fight to develop the present rising struggle of the working class in every sphere, the strike movement, the political agitation against the Labor Government, and the colonial struggle, the gathering revolutionary wave which will finally defeat the war plans of imperialism.

# The Class Character of Workmen's Compensation, Accident and Insurance Laws in the U.S.A.

By POOR AND ZACK  
(continued from April, 1930, issue)

Partial disabilities divide themselves into two groups: permanent partial, that is, "minor" injury for life, such as loss of hearing, loss of an arm, etc. and temporary partial, such as sprained wrists, dislocations, injuries to the face or body requiring various periods of healing. In the former cases there is a definite loss of functional activity, in the latter only recuperation is necessary. Do the States take the nature of the specific injuries into serious consideration? A few do. The vast majority are purposely ambiguous and vague, leaving the matter entirely in the hands of Industrial Commissions, who are invariably the friends and boon companions of the employers. Hence, in the table following we have indicated such vagueness in a separate column.

## AMOUNTS PAID BY STATES FOR TEMPORARY TOTAL DISABILITIES

| State            | Weekly<br>Average<br>Amount | Per Cent<br>Wage<br>Loss       | Not<br>Over<br>(years)         | Total<br>Not<br>Over | Remarks           |
|------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Alabama . . .    | \$10.00                     | 50-60                          | 6                              | —                    | Statute confusing |
| Alaska . . . .   | —                           | —                              | —                              | \$6,240              | Provide lump sum  |
| Arizona . . . .  | —                           | 50                             | —                              | 4,000                |                   |
| California . . . | —                           | 65                             | 4 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>  | 5,000                |                   |
| Colorado . . .   | 10.00                       | —                              | —                              | 1,560                |                   |
| Connecticut . .  | 11.50                       | 50                             | 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub> | —                    | Statute confusing |
| Delaware . . .   | 10.00                       | 50                             | 5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub>  | —                    |                   |
| Georgia . . . .  | 9.00                        | 50                             | 6                              | —                    | Statute confusing |
| Hawaii . . . .   | 9.00                        | 50                             | 6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>  | 5,000                |                   |
| Idaho . . . . .  | 10.50                       | 50                             | 3                              | —                    |                   |
| Illinois . . . . | 11.00                       | 50-65                          | 8                              | —                    |                   |
| Indiana . . . .  | 8.50                        | 50                             | 6                              | —                    |                   |
| Iowa . . . . .   | 10.50                       | ?                              | ?                              | —                    | Statute confusing |
| Kansas . . . .   | 9.00                        | 60                             | 8                              | —                    |                   |
| Kentucky . . .   | 10.00                       | 65                             | 6 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>  | 4,000                |                   |
| Louisiana . . .  | 12.50                       | 65                             | 6                              | —                    |                   |
| Maine . . . . .  | 10.50                       | 66 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> | 6                              | —                    |                   |

|                 |       |                                |    |       |                   |
|-----------------|-------|--------------------------------|----|-------|-------------------|
| Maryland . . .  | 11.50 | 50                             | ?  | 3,500 |                   |
| Massachusetts . | 10.50 | 66 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> | —  | 4,000 |                   |
| Michigan . . .  | 10.50 | 60                             | 10 | —     |                   |
| Minnesota . .   | 14.00 | 66 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> | 6  | —     | Statute confusing |
| Montana . . .   | 6.25  | 50                             | 1  | —     |                   |
| Nebraska . . .  | 10.50 | 66 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> | 6  | —     |                   |
| Nevada . . . .  | 8.00  | 50                             | 5  | —     |                   |
| New Hamp. .     | 10.00 | 50                             | 6  | —     |                   |
| New Jersey .    | ?     | 66 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> | 10 | —     |                   |
| New Mexico .    | 9.00  | —                              | —  | —     | Statute confusing |
| New York . .    | 14.00 | 66 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> | —  | 3,500 |                   |
| North Dakota    | 12.50 | 66 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> | —  | —     |                   |
| Ohio . . . . .  | 12.50 | 66 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> | —  | 3,750 |                   |
| Oklahoma . .    | ?     | 66 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> | 6  | —     | Statue vague      |

Permanent partial disabilities consist primarily of dismemberment in all its forms. The number of dismemberment cases for 1922-23 were over 75,000—a colossal offering to the inveterate greed of capitalist production, when it is borne in mind that practically all industrial accidents are eliminable if proper safety devices be installed and if sufficient rest periods be granted during work hours. However, industrial murder of workers is perfectly legal under capitalism.

Besides dismemberment there were for the year 1922-23 about 29,000 other permanent partial disabilities, such as rupture, disfigurement, etc. The nature of this group of accidents is such as to alter completely the injured man's mode of life, for whom the injury is permanent the compensation is—with the exception of the Federal Government—temporary. Take a worker who has lost a hand—the State grants him compensation for about 2 years, sometimes 3 years, in few cases 4 years. But what is the wage earner to do after the period of payment has expired? He is no longer fit for his old work. His skill, if he was a skilled worker, has been destroyed. The same applies equally to semi-skilled workers. But even so, an unskilled worker cannot any longer command the same wage he received before the accident, for what the employer will pay a one-handed man, when he can get plenty with two hands. Hence the permanent partial disabled worker is compelled to seek odds and ends of employment, such as night watchman, ticket passer, etc., at a reduced wage for in no case can he compete successfully against workers not so disabled.

The methods employed by the several States to compensate this group of accidents are not uniform. It would seem from the data that the various State governments overdo themselves in their ser-

vility to the employing class interests. However, general schemes are observed as follows: (1) States paying lump sums. (2) States paying a percentage of wages for limited periods. (3) States paying weekly sums for limited periods in addition to temporary total during healing time. (4) States paying weekly sums for limited periods allowing no extra compensation for healing time.

During healing time the injured worker is in fact totally disabled, yet over 20 States make no provision in such cases. The reader should not be misled by the large figures when given in weeks. 400 weeks may sound high, but in reality it is less than four years.

#### PERMANENT PARTIAL DISABILITY

1) States paying lump sums for permanent partial disability are. Alaska, Washington, Wyoming. The payments average between \$750 and \$1,000.

2) States paying percentage of wages for a limited period are: Arizona, New Hampshire, Porto Rico, and the Federal Government. The payment averages between \$10 and \$12 a week over a time period of 5 to 6 years.

3) 36 States deny healing time period but pay weekly sums for limited number of weeks. The averages, in dollars, are as follows: For the loss of arm at shoulder, \$2,000; hand, \$1,500; thumb, \$600; Index finger, \$350; middle finger, \$300; ring finger, \$200; little finger, \$150. Leg at hip, \$1,700; foot, \$1,250; big toe, \$300, other toe, \$100. One ear, \$400; both ears, \$1,200; one eye, \$1,100.

4) 17 of the States pay weekly sums during healing time for a limited number of weeks, averaging \$10 per week.

Practically all the States in this group designate a maximum payment which in effect nullifies the provisions allocating a percentage of wages. An example: the State of Colorado declares it would pay 50% of wages. Suppose the injured worker earned \$50 per week—his allowance would be \$25. But the qualifying clause which follows explicitly states that in no case shall an injured worker be paid *more than a maximum sum of \$12 per week*. Hence the 50% provision only applies to wage earners who receive less than \$24 per week in wages. The insurance laws might just as well declare that they will pay 100%. One does not buy bread with percentages, but with money.

The State of Georgia in the above group provides a uniform period of 10 weeks for healing time.

The State of Wisconsin, where La Follette's liberal millenium reigns, provides as follows: "Specified major injuries, fixed percentages of total disability, specified lesser injuries 65% of wages

for fixed period subject to extension; others proportionate based on 70% schedule, all in addition to temporary total." Since the Department of Labor has not included the schedule of payments there is no way of computing the definite sums paid to the disabled workers of that State, but of what we know of experience, the system is the same as in other States.

In the class of workers under Permanent Partial Disability, the States in Group 4 grant the most "liberal" treatment. The apparent liberality exists only when viewed from the parsimonious attitude of the remainder of the States. Minnesota, a State where labor is more or less influential, allows \$14 per week for the loss of arm at the shoulder, plus \$14 during healing time, a total of \$28 per week. But this comparatively high allowance is in reality a myth since its duration is on the average not more than 4 months. The worker's arm is ripped by an unprotected machine; he is taken to a hospital and the wound is treated until healed. While he is at the hospital or at home in a weak condition the temporary total of \$14 continues, but no sooner does the physician declare the dismembered worker's wound healed, the State immediately cuts off the healing time grant and leaves the armless worker with \$14 per week. And this is the most favored State!

Colorado allocates for the same disability \$8.50 per week.

And in the State of Oregon the colossal sum of \$6.25 per week!

For all States the average is not more than \$12 per week.

The outstanding feature of the treatment of Permanent Partial Disability by the several States is the punishment of the wounded worker for the misdeeds of the employer. For in no State is the principle of permanent allowance for Permanent Partial disability recognized. In effect the employing capitalists say to the workers: "You complain to us that we fail to install safety devices in our factories. *But do you realize that safety devices cost money and if we were to accede to your demands our profits would be cut down, dividends decreased, and the volume of our stock on the stock exchange reduced? Hence if your arm is dismembered by the machine you will be punished by a decrease in your earning power. Capital must make profits, and comes before all.*"

We now come to the negative provisions of the Workmen's Compensation and Insurance Laws; the "buts" and "excepts" which the cunning bourgeois law-makers sneak into the clauses of the laws in order to effect stealthily what they cannot accomplish openly. As has already been noted at the beginning of this survey, the "buts"

and the "excepts" are so numerous as to render the laws a typical expression of capitalist Christian hypocrisy.

#### WHEN A LAW IS NOT A LAW

*In 31 States the law is entirely optioned.* That is to say, if the employer chooses to disregard it, that is all there is to it. It is up to him! Of course the worker will be solemnly assured that he has his remedy at the courts, that is exactly what these "laws" are supposed to replace. If the courts had been effective instruments in the redress of worker's injuries, why have the "laws"? Why duplicate the apparatus? The trickery of the lawyers in the interests of the employers whom they serve in collusion with the courts is commonplace and need not be dwelt on here. What we wish to point out is that the Workmen's Compensation and Insurance Laws were designed to camouflage the brutal industrial murder and crippling of the workers because the archaic brutal class methods of capitalist courts had to be reformed on wholesome lines. However, the practical result is that *the disabled worker must have means immediately, but the lawyer can by means of appeals and demurs, prolong the case until the worker is penniless and then force him to settle out of court for a song.* When the legislatures in 31 out of 48 States declare the laws optional it is in most cases merely another way of saying that the laws are no laws, but only a *subterfuge*.

In 14 States the law is compulsory. However, "no law," as asserts the Department of Labor, "*is of complete coverage*, and the terms 'elective' and 'compulsory' apply to the laws in regard to the occupations said to be covered by the acts." Translated into English this means that the "laws" are a makeshift and cover only a small amount of the workers engaged in production. The Optional and Compulsion States are as follows:

*Optional States:* Alabama, Colorado, Delaware, Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin.

*Optional States:* Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Maryland, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Porto Rico, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and Ohio.

#### CATEGORIES OF WORKERS DISCRIMINATED AGAINST

There are in all *ten distinct categories* of workers against whom discriminations have been effected. These range from total denial of the benefits provided under the "laws" to reduced benefits as in

the case of non-resident workers, that is, workers from Mexico, West Indies and Canada. They are as follows:

1. *Agricultural Laborers.* This group numbering according to the 1920 census, 5,449,332 working men and working women, is *specifically and totally excluded* from operation of the laws in all States with the exception of Hawaii and New Jersey. In three States, Kentucky, Minnesota and South Dakota, workers engaged in the threshing of grain are covered by the laws.

2. *Domestic Workers.* New Jersey is the only State which makes provision for domestic workers. All other States specifically and totally exclude these workers. According to the last census, this group numbered 3,034,000.

3. *"Casual" Workers.* What the law-makers meant by casual workers is not clear. That the phrase is highly equivocal is obvious. Indeed, we believe that it was purposely inserted in order to grant the Commissions, who adjudicate the claims, a greater latitude in their rulings favoring the employers. What then can be the reason for embodying in a law such a mystic and ambiguous phrase as "casual workers"? A worker may be "casual" to a specific employer, but so far as the employers as a class are concerned, he never is, for if he does not labor for Capitalist *A*, he labors for Capitalist *B*, and if not for *B*, then for *C*. He is not a wage slave of any particular employer, but of all employers as a class. Marx long ago analyzed the bourgeois platitude about "free" labor. The worker is *not* the wage slave of Gary, Rockefeller, etc., but is bound under capitalism to all the capitalists as a class.

Under the circumstances an estimate of the number of "casual" workers who are totally and specifically excluded from the benefits of the laws is impossible. In a strict interpretation of the phrase the vast majority of the workers are casual, for the turnover of labor-power is great. The Department of Labor, seeing the cat in the bag, declares: "Employees whose employment is but casual and (sometime "or") not in the usual course of the employer's trade (*sic*) or business are quite generally excluded."

The exclusion of this group of workers is general in practically all States.

4. *Workers Receiving More Than a Specified Wage or Salary.* The State of Hawaii excludes all workers earning more than \$36 per week. Porto Rico places the sum at \$30 per week. Rhode Island—at \$36 per week, and Vermont—at \$40 per week.

5. *Public Workers.* Public workers are excluded in six States: Alaska, Arizona, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Tennessee and Texas.

F. *Exclusion where there is less than the designated number of workers.* There are 21 States which make this discrimination as follows: States excluding operation of law where minimum number of workers is less than:

*Two*—Oklahoma.

*Three*—Kentucky, Texas, Ohio, Utah and Wisconsin.

*Four*—Colorado, New Mexico and New York.

*Five*—Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Kansas, New Hampshire, and Tennessee.

*Six*—Maine and Rhode Island.

*Ten*—Georgia.

*Eleven*—Vermont and Virginia.

*Sixteen*—Alabama.

7. *Non-Resident Workers.* This group consists of workers "imported" into the U. S. by agents of big business from Canada, West Indies and Mexico. Some States place workers from Canada on a reduced benefit schedule, a few on the same footing as local workmen, but the vast majority of the States do not do so. The forms of discrimination in this group are varied.

a) Specific exclusion is provided by four States: Alabama, Hawaii, New Mexico and South Dakota.

b) Indirect exclusion is provided by 12 States by omitting from its laws all provisions for such workers and by raising questions of dependency; they are: Arizona, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Porto Rico, Vermont, California and Montana.

c) Reduced benefits. 19 States provided reduced benefits to "non-resident" workers:

I. Benefits reduced to 75%: Alaska, Maryland, Nebraska and Pennsylvania.

II. Benefits reduced to 60%: Nevada.

III. Benefits reduced to 50%: Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, New York, Utah and Washington.

IV. Benefits reduced to 33%: Wyoming.

V. Benefits reduced to 25%: Colorado, Kansas and Virginia.

The States which make no discrimination against "non-residents" are ten: Connecticut, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, Wisconsin and the Federal Government.

The waiting period required by most States is in reality a backdoor method of discrimination. The data supplied by the Labor Bureau statistician is unsatisfactory because he is not interested in uncovering data from the workers' point of view. However, it appears that in general all States, except Oregon, Porto Rico, South Dakota,

deny injured workers the benefits provided by the "laws" when the injury is less than a specified number of days, or weeks. For example, in New Jersey a disability which lasts less than 10 days is not compensated. This simply means that the worker loses 10 days' wages out of his own pocket, because he was disabled by unprotected machinery of his employer. The "laws" with the exception of the 3 States cited above adhere strictly to the principle of transferring the losses of industrial accidents to the shoulders of the workers, regardless of the fact that they—the employers are the guilty culprits.

STATES DENYING COMPENSATION WHEN DISABILITY IS LESS THAN  
A SPECIFIED PERIOD

*Three days:* Maryland, Utah, Washington, U. S.

*Five days:* Oklahoma.

*One week:* Alabama, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Kansas, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin.

*Ten days:* Colorado, New Jersey, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Virginia.

*Two weeks:* Alabama, Arizona, Delaware, Iowa, Montana.

The following States dock the waiting period if the disability is less than a fixed number of weeks. Thus in the State of New York, if a worker is disabled for less than 49 days—let us say 48 days—he is docked for the first week. Instead of receiving compensation for 48 days—the duration of disability—he gets compensation for 41 days only.

STATES DOCKING WAITING PERIOD WHEN DISABILITY IS LESS THAN  
A FIXED NUMBER OF WEEKS

*One week:* Nevada, New Hampshire, North Dakota.

*Two weeks:* Arizona.

*Three weeks:* Wisconsin, Wyoming.

*Four weeks:* Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Rhode Island, Alabama, Delaware.

*Six weeks:* Louisiana, Maine, Nebraska, Tennessee, Virginia, Montana.

*Seven weeks:* New York, New Jersey.

*Eight weeks:* Alabama.

9. *Hazardous employment:* The phrase "hazardous employment" recalls the equal imputation of "casual" workers. As a matter of

fact the employers in practice make practically no distinction as to what employments are hazardous or not. The coal diggers' occupation is about the most hazardous there is. Yet the pay of these workers does not average more than those whose labor is not so hazardous. But when it comes to paying compensation benefits the cunning employers dig up such metaphysical distinctions as "casual hazardous," "non-resident," etc. Perhaps we will soon hear of some State solemnly declaring that bald-headed workers are excluded.

In this connection it should be borne in mind that in no case does the decision as to what employments are hazardous rest with the workers. The decision is invariably made by the bourgeois legislatures or their commissioners. The workers organized or unorganized have absolutely no voice in the matter at all.

There are twelve States in all which make their compensation and insurance laws apply only to hazardous employments; all other workers being barred. They are as follows: Arizona, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming.

10. *Disability caused by occupational diseases:* It is a common fact that occupational diseases disables a man far more than dismemberment or general injuries. By attacking the vital organs, occupational diseases reduce the earning capacity of a worker for a longer period of years, if not for life. Yet the various States refuse to recognize such disabilities. It is not here a question of fact. The fact is admitted. The medical experts have fixed a definite connection existing between particular employments and diseases. Silicosis, for example, is a lung disease induced by inhaling silica, a fine sand found around mines. Similarly, tuberculosis is a disease generally induced by long hours of labor in stuffy overcrowded factories or any other work place. The long hours exhaust the vital organs and leave them a prey to the attacks of the various bacilli. These facts are today admitted by all, even the employers. But when it comes to recognizing such diseases as compensable by the State, the employers with their tongue in their cheek, pretend that it would be discouraging to the "independence" and "self reliance" of the workers to grant any benefits to them. Ever since the capitalists became statesmanlike strategists and changed their tactics from a direct frontal attack against the workers to that of indirect domination their hypocrisy knows no limits.

Occupational diseases are recognized by only twelve States and the Federal Government, and even in these States recognition is not general but only for designated employments. They are as follows: California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois (in certain em-

ployments by separate act), Massachusetts (by court decision), New York (listed occupations), North Dakota (by constitution of Bureau), Ohio (listed occupations), Porto Rico, Wisconsin, Kentucky, and U. S.

#### MINOR FEATURES

The principle features of the "laws" have already been enumerated. The minor clauses — three in number — consist of: Fund provisions, hospitalization, and administration.

1. *Method of providing funds*: Eight States provide their own facilities. Payment is made directly by the State. These are: North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Porto Rico, Washington, West Virginia, Wyoming and Nevada.

Ten States provide both State and private insurance, leaving the deciding factor to competition. It should be stated, however, that the Labor Bureau statistician withholds all details, so we are at a loss as to the real workings of the plan. The ten States are: California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maryland, Michigan, Montana, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Utah. The remainder of the States provide private insurance or self-insurance. Self-insurance is recognition by the State of the employers' solvency.

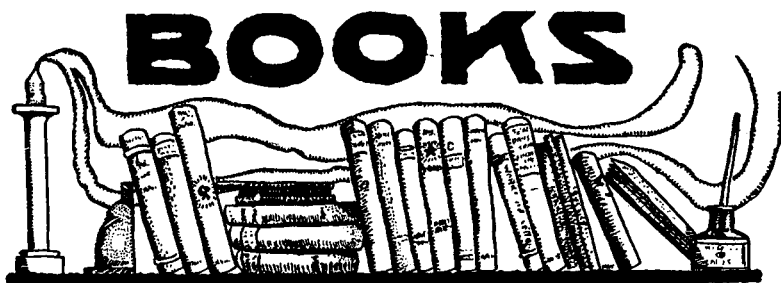
2. *Hospitalization*: Hospitalization during disability is generally allowed by all States. A few States grant the needed funds for operations when such are deemed necessary for the injured worker's health. The maximum expenditure for operations, however, is limited to \$150.

3. *Administration*: The administration of the Workmen's Compensation and Insurance Laws is invariably placed in the hands of bourgeois bureaucrats. In no State is representation given to organized labor. The Governor appoints a Commission of five or more bureaucrats, as the individual laws may provide, to administer the laws. Their decisions in thirty-eight States are of a summary character. The worker can expect little sympathy and less justice from this group of men, mostly corrupt cogs in the capitalist political machine, who are by a thousand invisible threads tied to the class of exploiters.

In ten States settlements are left to the "agreement" between the worker and employer. This is an indirect way of letting the boss decide how much he will pay his maimed worker. Of course, if the worker refuses to accept his boss's decision, he can seek a "remedy" in the courts. This sounds very democratic and liberal; in fact, it is like applying to the hangman for mercy.

It must be added in conclusion that the latest data from highly industrialized States show an increase of accidents up to thirty

per cent and more, which is due to the terrific speed-up in production in this imperialist era, which American imperialism imposes on the worker in order to build on the pyramids of industrially maimed, discarded, crippled and murdered workers this "glittering marvel" of a bourgeois world empire of the United States of America.



## ABOUT A CERTAIN "EXPERIMENT" IN AUTOBIOGRAPHY."

By M. POKROVSKY

(Continued)

But the 1923 discussion as depicted in *My Life*, is the jewel of the whole book. Before this final chord is struck we have quite a number of specimens of "artificial selection." Some one would have to analyze them chapter by chapter, having recourse to the sources at hand (for instance, the Lenin Institute or the Department of Party History of the Institute of the Communist Party). Even if not for our Party membership, still for a foreign public this will be very necessary work. *Mein Leben* in German sold like "hot cakes" before my very eyes. But there is neither room nor, strictly speaking, any necessity here for such a close analysis. I therefore shall endeavor to dissect only the *method* of our autobiographer, based on one instance. By this specimen may be judged the method pursued in the writing of the entire book.

The episode which I am selecting is the famous "August Bloc" of 1912. According to the exposition in *My Life* that was a perfectly innocent and wholly Bolshevik matter. "I made an attempt to form a unity conference of the representatives of all Social Democratic fractions." This attempt enjoyed the sympathies of Rosa Luxemburg. "Lenin, however, opposed the unification with all his might." As it is the underlying motive (*leitmotif*) of the whole book that Lenin was the friend and teacher of the author ("he was my teacher. This does not mean that I, somewhat belated, merely repeated his words and gestures. I learned from him how to arrive independently at the same decisions as he did,") (II, p. 123) and as he evidently was his best pupil, it is to be understood that he was the one whom Lenin designated as one of his successors: "the indisputable object of his will was: to facilitate my work as the leader" (same place, p. 217) which position makes it incumbent upon him to add forthwith: "The whole future course of events showed that Lenin was right." Nor was Trotsky especially to blame for this either: "The history of the fight between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks is at the same time a history of the incessant attempts at unification."<sup>1</sup>

Having in mind evidently "new-comers and ignoramuses," in which garb the present-day Party reader appears to Trotsky, the "autobiographer" is modestly silent as to who it was with whom Lenin attempted so frequently to unite

<sup>1</sup>See all this in vol. I, pp. 256-8.

and with whom Trotsky *did* in fact unite in 1912. But on this point we have the absolutely definite statement of one whom even Trotsky recognizes (hypocritically, as has already been pointed out) as the highest authority. Lenin very often, and in great detail, touched upon the question of the August bloc and Trotsky's role in that affair. Let us listen to what the "teacher" said about his "pupil."

As early as April, 1912, about half a year before the conference about which Trotsky was speaking, Lenin came to the conclusion (not relying merely upon himself, but on the basis of the words of Plechanov) that the "conference was being called by 'liquidators.'" "The liquidatory character of the conference called by the O. C. was established by Plechanov with irrefutable clearness." "Who, then, is left," asks Lenin, pointing out that, in connection with Plechanov's frankness, the Bolshevik-conciliators spoke against the conference as: "obvious liquidators and Trotsky. . . . The basis of this bloc was clear: the liquidators enjoy full liberty to follow up their line 'as heretofore' in *Our Work* and in *Our Dawn*, but Trotsky, from abroad, screens them with a revolutionary phrase that costs him nothing and does not commit them to anything."<sup>2</sup>

In fact, only "newcomers and ignoramuses" could fail to know now that the August conference of 1912 was called to counteract that of the January conference of the Bolsheviks during the same year. "The January conference and the functionaries elected by it are the only thing that now really unites all the workers of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party in Russia. Outside of it there is only the promise of the members of the Bund to summon with Trotsky the liquidating conference of the O. C. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

Thus the conference set itself the task of uniting the wavering elements of the Party around the *liquidators*, that is, around those elements of the R. S. D. W. P. that were fighting the Bolsheviks. This makes a clean sweep of all of Trotsky's references to Lenin's attempts at unification: When and where then did Lenin try to unite with the *liquidators*, and moreover, how was it possible in the very nature of things? Trotsky speculates largely on the fact that the liquidators remained dissatisfied with his work and suspected his sincerity even before the conference. But alas, this is an evaluation of Trotsky's moral physiognomy and not at all of his political position. The Trotsky of 1912 did not inspire his "friends" with confidence, just as he did not command the respect of his opponents. He flew into a terrible fit on account of the fact that his anti-Lenin letter to Chkheidze of April, 1913 was published in 1924.

"The use which which the epigoni made of my letter to Chkheidze is one of the greatest deceptions of modern world history. The forged documents of the French reactionaries at the time of the Dreyfus affair are nothing as against this political fraud of Stalin and his associates."<sup>4</sup>

Of course, *forged* documents are as nothing alongside of a document that is *authentic*, such as is this letter of Trotsky's to Chkheidze. Why the printing of an authentic document is a "fraud" is hard to understand. But the

<sup>2</sup>Collected Works, vol. XII, part I, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup>Same place, 95. O. C. "Organizational Commission" M. P.

<sup>4</sup>II, 259.

attempts of the "autobiographer" to hide from the "newcomers and ignoramus" (for only from such is it possible to hide it) the fact that for that epoch we have not only the reactions of Trotsky to Lenin, the publication of which led to such indignation on the part of the former, but likewise reactions of Lenin to Trotsky are undoubtedly a fraud. In the *Prosveshchenie* ("Education") of May, 1914 (that is in an issue appealing to the widest circles of readers in Russia, not in the Party press abroad), one might have read:

"Old participants in the Marxist movement in Russia know the figure of Trotsky well and for them it is not worth while speaking of it but the younger generation of workers does not know it, so speaking becomes necessary inasmuch as this is a typical figure of five groups abroad that are in fact hesitating between the liquidators and the Party.

"In the days of the old *Iskra* (1901-1903) we had a nickname for such waverers and turncoats from the 'Economists' to the 'Iskraites' and vice versa: 'Tushin's hop'; (thus warriors were called in the turbulent times of early Russia for switching from one camp to the other.)

"When we speak about liquidatorship we fix upon a well-known ideological current that had made headway for years, being basically connected with 'Menshevism' and 'Economism' in the twenty years' history of Marxism, connected with the policies and ideology of a definite class, that of the liberal bourgeoisie.

"'Tushin's hoppers' declared themselves to be above the faction on the sole ground that today they 'borrow' ideas from this, tomorrow from that faction. In 1901-1903 Trotsky was an ardent 'Iskraite' and Ryazanov called his role at the 1903 session that of 'Lenin's club.' At the end of 1903 Trotsky was an ardent Menshevik, that is, he had switched from the 'Iskraites' to the 'Economists'; he proclaims that 'an abyss lies between the old and the new 'Iskra.' In 1904-1905 he quits the Mensheviks and straddles and fence, now collaborating with Martinoff (an "Economist"), now spasmodically proclaiming his left "permanent revolution." In 1906-1907 he lands with the Bolsheviks and in the spring of 1907 declares his solidarity with Rosa Luxemburg.

"During the period of the disintegration, after much 'non-factional' wavering, he again moves to the right and in August, 1912 he enters the bloc of the liquidators. Now he is again quitting these, repeating, however, their smallish ideas in *their essentials*.

"Such types were characteristic of the splinters of historical bodies and formations of yesterday, when the workers' mass movement in Russia was still dormant and any little group had a 'free hand' to constitute itself a current, a group or a faction; in brief, a 'power' dickering about unification with others."<sup>5</sup>

They will say: Lenin wrote this "in the heat of discussion." Why, then, do we not find such a slaughtering characterization of Bogdanov or of Martov? "In the heat of the discussion," a sharp phrase, may be flung once; but this characterization is continued in its essentials for the stretch of two years.<sup>6</sup> It recapitulates a trunkful of mutual contacts between Lenin and Trotsky and summarizes all of Lenin's thoughts about his future "pupil" from 1901 on. Lenin knew how to forget and forgave much but this did not mean that he

<sup>5</sup>Works, Volume XII, Part II, pages 462-463.

<sup>6</sup>See same place, Part I, 177, 181, 313; Part II, pages 412, 448, 450, 461, 537.

disowned his former characterizations. It was not necessary at all to have recourse to "trickeries" eclipsing the Dreyfus affair that the Party might know what the opinion of its leader was about his "heir," as it were, after an acquaintanceship of twelve years with the latter. They agreed not to remind Trotsky of his past in the hope that he had become different. The slightest attempt to return to his old factionalism not only conferred the right but made it obligatory to remind the masses of what used to be said about Trotsky-the-factionalist in years gone by.

When did Trotsky resume the formation of his faction? This could hardly have occurred right after the October revolution: during those weeks he felt himself again the "first pupil," though not so far ahead of the second pupil as at the St. Paul High School that his own faction hardly appeared necessary to him as a practical matter. His thoughts already placed him at the head of the world revolution, and he thought of this revolution itself as something immediately visible, as a matter of the morrow. So why a faction? Factions are founded by one who feels himself weak—Trotsky felt stronger during that brief period than anyone else.

Then followed the stunning blow of the Brest catastrophe—for Trotsky it was nothing short of a catastrophe, a catastrophe three-fourths of which, as he must have been aware (for while not a genius, Trotsky it still not a blockhead), could be traced to his own flightiness. One could not enter more flightily upon such a responsible office as the conduct of the foreign policies of the First Socialist State in the world. One illustration of this flightiness was preserved for us by Trotsky himself. On citing someone's reminiscences he culls these his own words without controverting them: "What kind of diplomatic work do you suppose we are going to have anyway? I will just issue a few revolutionary proclamations to the peoples and then I close up shop."<sup>7</sup>

My memory serves me with another illustration, one still more painful, inasmuch as here immediate practical results were close at hand. On joining our peace delegation (that claimed it was a continuation of the armistice, with all members already at Brest), I put in my appearance at Smolney following an anecdote related to me in the full belief in the likeliness of the occurrence: There was an uprising on the German eastern front; 30,000 insurgent soldiers had entrenched themselves somewhere between Kovno and Grodno, several divisions had been relieved from the front to pacify them.

The anecdote proved literally to have been "snatched out of the air," as the Germans would say. Absolutely nothing like it was going on at the German front at that time, but it was unusually characteristic of the state of mind of my partner in this chat. Trotsky not only believed in the imminence of the European revolution, he believed that it would take place literally the next day or two. Under such conditions, what kind of diplomacy could be expected after all? How compromise oneself in the eyes of the German proletariat by personally conducting negotiations with a government that would no longer exist the day after tomorrow? Clearly, the need of the hour was to play for time a few days and then have a talk with the chairman of the German *Sovnarkom* (Soviet State Department), Karl Liebknecht.

It never entered Trotsky's mind that this government, on the verge of being deposed, would exist on for a sufficient length of time to deal us a

<sup>7</sup>II, 61.

terrific blow, that it was necessary to stave off this blow and not to begin serious negotiations with the Germans; that a serious diplomatic fight had to be put up to gain that end, taking advantage of the dissensions in the camp of the enemy to conduct that fight just as carefully as you would conduct war operations. He imagined naively that it was merely a question of transferring the Circus Modern to Brest and the cat would be in the bag. His imagination failed to grasp that only so much of his speeches at Brest would reach the German worker as the war censor of William II would permit to be printed.

Coupled with this faith, exaggerated to the extreme, in the might of his words we have a weakness reaching the point of cowardice before his actual opponent whom we were facing eye to eye. After the negotiations had been broken off in December, it was decided that we would not return to Brest under any circumstances; further negotiations would be conducted solely on neutral territory (Stockholm was suggested); or "by wire" in the barracks between the two fronts. One must read the memoirs of Chernin to understand how much they feared in the German camp that we would not come back to that Brest trap. It was essentially a show-down as to who was more in need of peace at the time. Having once agreed on Brest, we thereby definitely inculcated in the minds of the diplomats of the central powers the conviction that the Soviet authorities wanted peace at any price—this would turn the psychological scales so much against us with these diplomats that no oratorical successes of Trotsky would counterbalance them. So we went a second time to Brest, after having all but formally capitulated, which deprived us of all the advantages of a capitulation, as it allowed the enemy to continue considering us as a belligerent party.

I received at the time no explanations of this capitulation before a contest and received none now after reading through the corresponding chapter in the *Experiment in Autobiography*. "We had to bow before the ultimatum and remain in Brest-Litovsk"—that is all one can read about this in the memoirs of the head of the Soviet delegation. Why? If it were necessary to bow before every ultimatum of the Germans, how is it that the ultimatum of the tenth of February was rejected? The risk on the first occasion was less, because Kuehlmann and Hoffmann did not yet have the pact with the Ukrainian Rada in their hands—a quite imperfect pact though it was, still a means to dupe the masses of the German people and to drag reluctant Austria along. It is impossible to find any logic here; even if you accept the point of view of peace at any price, this still was not the slightest reason to shout it from the house-tops and to deliver yourself completely into the hands of your enemy. But no one had accepted this point of view—Lenin was for negotiations "by wire." He insisted on peace only if the Germans should issue an ultimatum on peace, but not on the locality for negotiations.

It is difficult to find any logic here, but it is the easiest thing in the world to find a psychological explanation for this. On the following page we read about the life of the delegation at Brest during the negotiations:

"Round about the staff buildings ran a high barbed-wire fence in different directions. During my morning walks I used to run across signs reading 'any Russian found lurking about will be shot'.

This referred to the prisoners. I asked myself whether this sign also referred to me—we were half-prisoners ourselves—and so I turned back.”<sup>8</sup>

There you have it—as soon as he saw a real, or what to him seemed to be a real obstacle, he immediately “turns back.” The writer of these lines during these same days went out about the Brest citadel for tens of kilometers without being subjected once to any greater unpleasantness than having to show his pass to the German police officers. I would speak with the Russian prisoners—inasmuch as the Germans that guarded them displayed astonishing good-naturedness on this point, anxiously warning me and those who had joined in our chat when an officer made his appearance on the horizon; I would watch for half an hour at a stretch how the German raw recruits were practicing with hand grenades, etc., etc. The devil is not so black as a frightened imagination paints him; and the imagination of the future head of the world-wide revolution was frightfully aroused—this was clearly reflected in an incident about which the *Experiment in Autobiography* unfortunately makes no mention. All delegations from Brest used to take rides with their entire staffs, except ours; ours used to leave without its head and another two or three members. The head and these members departed immediately after our none-too-polite reply to the ultimatum had been handed in—the same night—the answer was at first drafted more politely, but it is not worth while now talking about who sharpened its tone. It was not Trotsky). It seemed to them fraught with danger to remain even one superfluous hour in Brest. But let there be no misunderstanding: I, of course, do not mean to suspect Trotsky in the least of physical cowardice—he is physically a courageous man. To be sure, he was merely saving the “leader,” without whom the revolution might perish. But the point is that there was no special danger threatening the “leader.”

There was but one real danger—to find oneself in an extremely awkward position in case the fine network of tactics, based exclusively on psychology, be rent asunder by the mailed fist of the German imperialists. When that happened Trotsky was simply at his wits’ end, and his conduct, after the Germans had begun their attack, was unbelievably pitiful. He would vote now for, now against, the German ultimatum, then again for it, and finally, at the really decisive vote, he abstained . . . “to assure Lenin a majority of one vote.” (!)<sup>9</sup> In conclusion, he showed how offended he was at history for failing to be complaisant to him by not only handing in his resignation from the office of Commissary of Foreign Affairs, but actually quit his post, that is, left it to others to sip the soup that he had cooked.<sup>10</sup>

In this state of mind he once again did not take well to the factions. He had to live down somehow the impression left upon him and others by this terrible fiasco. Hence, his complete lack of ideas of any kind—and his too business-like, not to say too officious, entry upon the new work which Lenin gave him—the formation of the Red Army. It seems that at Brest no specialists of any description were required; now salvation lay wholly in specialists. “Delays as a general rule were taboo; mistakes entailed immediate punishment.”<sup>10</sup> Thus Trotsky depicts the setting of his new field

<sup>8</sup>II, 94.

<sup>9</sup>Vol. II, 116-17.

<sup>10</sup>See minutes of the session of C. C. of February 24, 1918, in Vol. 22 of the complete Collected Works of Lenin, 3rd edition, page 286.

of activity; but did we not just give the most convincing proof that this applied every bit as much to diplomats as to ministers of war?

Only after the war had begun to affect his reputation, that had been deeply tarnished by his diplomacy, does Trotsky commence to recall by-gones. But now the "leader" could no longer rely on himself alone. He had to hammer together for himself a "little group." The first intimation that the Trotskyist faction was taking shape evidently harks back to the end of 1919—the chronology of the *Autobiography* is very inexact here. That this intimation assumed the form of a "denunciation," as it were, of Comrade Stalin, whom Comrade Menzhinsky "gave away," so to speak, should not cause any excitement.<sup>11</sup> How too noble by far is the indignation displayed by Trotsky (what an innocent child he is, don't you know) at the news that an "intrigue" was afoot against him, but he took it too much to heart for such innocence; and he was a little too hasty in checking up directly from Lenin—just what does he know? Evidently he was unsuccessful in "feeling out" Lenin, and Trotsky merely "understood" that "Menzhinsky was not talking just so," that is, that something had leaked out further than it should have about the faction that was being lined up.

Toward the winter of 1920-1921, at the time of the famous dispute over the trade unions, we find the factional work in full swing. That dispute is pictured as devoid in every way of "any importance." Of course there is not a syllable to be found in *My Life* referring to Trotsky's manoeuvre, no less so than to that fight, in shifting almost instantaneously from adherence to "governmentalization" of the trade unions, to an adherent of the diametrically opposite, but likewise anti-Lenin, position of Bucharin-Dzerzhinsky, but it was no longer possible to pass over in silence his factional work during that period.

"Even at the time of the Convention (X) I had already liquidated whatever conferences there had been with those like-minded on the question of professionals. Within few weeks after the convention Lenin became convinced that I was no less anxious than he to liquidate the temporary groupings whose very basis in principle had been removed from under their feet."<sup>12</sup>

It is of course true that there had been no "basis in principle," but Trotsky himself is compelled to admit that the groupings did exist; and even a little child will refuse to believe that as far back as that time they had already ceased to exist for that was the exact time when these "groupings" changed from "temporary" to permanent.

A denial of this will again hold only with "ignoramus and newcomers"—newcomers, who did not enter the Party until 1925, and ignoramus who are altogether thick-headed. Anyone who worked in the Party from 1921-1923 will find even an attempt at concealing these "groupings" of Trotsky's adherents laughable. One of Trotsky's nearest lieutenants was at that time a member of a Soviet collective of which I was chairman. During a conversation with him I expressed my intention to call a meeting of this collective for Tuesday, to the best of my recollection. "Tuesday is impossible; our C. C. meets on Tuesdays," was the answer I heard. "How on Tuesdays?" I exclaimed in astonishment, "the Org Buro meets on Wednesday and the Politburo meets on Thursday." "Yes, but this is not the CC, but a

<sup>11</sup>Same place, 168.

<sup>12</sup>II, 181-184.

certain conference." . . . It was not difficult to surmise of what sort of "C. C." this fellow had inadvertently been blubbing. In Moscow they even named the secretary of this "C. C." with no uncertainty.

Some day the history of this "C. C." will be written likewise in the form of *My Life* of one or another of its members—let us hope, however, not in the style of *My Life*, of its chairman, for the latter makes a sweeping denial of the very existence of a Trotskyist faction. It must be said that this goes excellently hand in hand with his entire world philosophy (*Weltanschauung*). In the forefront you will always find his own "ego." While reading his book no one would think that organized groups, Parties, for instance, play any role whatever in our politics. You encounter only individual persons uniting sometimes in small collectives without any basic principles, depending on their weakness and as occasion demands—but always for *personal* ends. The Party is a pitiful plaything in the hands of these people. Perhaps the reason there is no room for the Trotskyite grouplets in Trotsky's reminiscences is that the author of these reminiscences despised them as he despised in his heart all masses in general. You don't believe it? Read over the characterization summarized in Chapter 39, *Lenin's Illness*:

"1923 was the first year of an intensive, but as yet thoughtless (?) strangulation and wrecking of the Bolshevik Party. Lenin was fighting a terrible malady. The triumvirate<sup>13</sup> was fighting with the Party. A grave tenseness was in the air, which toward the fall resolved itself into a "discussion" against the opposition (!!!) A second revolution had begun: the fight against Trotskyism. . ."<sup>14</sup>

We will speak anon about the "discussion against the opposition." But you must agree yourselves that it is possible to find room to write all that has been quoted just now only in a state of keen "inspiredness," when "from under some hidden weight come words not expected by the orator"—nor the writer either. "It has gone too far, oh lord, it has gone too far!" the flagellators (a religious sect in Russia) exclaim when the "spirit" has descended down upon their meeting. It certainly "went too far" with Trotsky when he began to write about "strangulation and wrecking of the Bolshevik Party" in 1923. But what the sober man retaineth, the drunkard will reveal: to what purpose did he look down upon that same Party to picture its wrecking as the work of *three* men! Three people are capable of producing a second revolution and are "strangling" the collective idea in a million people! And at that three men acting exclusively with *personal* motives against a definite *person*.

"The idea of a triumvirate: Stalin, Zinoviev, and Kameneff, had been prepared long ago. *It's spearhead was pointed at me. The sole task* of the conspirators lay in preparing the groundwork for sufficient organizational support to crown the triumvirate as the legal heir of Lenin."<sup>15</sup>

Further on we are told how a "little note" of Lenin's barely missed undoing the whole confab. With history taking such a course, a little note,

<sup>13</sup>Stalin, Zinoviev, Kameneff.

<sup>14</sup>II, 227.

<sup>15</sup>Same place, 223. (Emphasis mine, M.P.)

aye, an inkwell upset by chance, would suffice to have the government fall. And to think that this fellow was for decades considered a Marxist!

It is a well-known fact that the illnesses of those giants that create world history become of themselves historical factors, the weightiness of which is not at all disputed. In the place where in Trotsky's book the reader finds three histories of illnesses plus some duck-shooting, future "falsifiers of history" will have the story of the fight of the Trotskyist faction against the Party.

Yes, yes, I am not imagining things. What prevented the overthrow of the "Epigoni" (now a "triumvirate") in 1923? Illness—Lenin's illness—nothing but that illness.

"I entertain no doubts but that if I had spoken out on the eve of the 12th convention in the spirit of the Lenin-Trotsky "block" against Stalin's bureaucracy, I would have come off victorious even without Lenin's direct participation in the fight" . . . "In 1922-23 it was still quite possible to seize the controlling position by an open attack upon the faction of the National Socialist officials that was rapidly taking shape—those usurpers of the apparatus, those unlawful inheritors of October, the epigoni of Bolshevism. The chief obstacle on this road lay however in the condition of Lenin himself" . . . "In all plans and calculations lack of definiteness was of decisive moment: traceable to Lenin himself with his physical condition" . . . "Due to the exclusive position occupied by Lenin in the Party the uncertainty of his personal condition brought about uncertainty in the condition of the whole Party."<sup>16</sup>

Then, for good measure, some "shooting" kept Trotsky himself "laid up in bed for several weeks." Thus the "epigoni" saved their hides in those days so critical for them. It should not, therefore, require a great imagination to see that under such circumstances Trotsky had to take most scrupulous care of his own health. How could one fail to understand that? He did so and on a cold autumn day he set out duck shooting!

Of these world historic events that determined the fate of more than one Soviet Union the reader will learn on pages 234-238 of the Second Volume of *"M. L."* with all particulars necessary for such a solemn occasion, with a biography of the hunter who directed the activities of Lenin's nearest successor during those fateful days, together with profound historical digressions (as far back as Ivan the Terrible), with the family of the chauffeur whose nearness to the great event likewise made him an historical personage, etc., etc. In brief, if anyone began reading *My Life* from here on without any exact idea of the author's mental make-up, such a careless reader would deserve the punishment of finding himself in an exceedingly foolish position. Likely as not he would cast the book aside in disgust and come to the conclusion that the author is merely poking fun at him, the reader. But the reader of the present observations knows with whom we are dealing; he knows that here there is no occasion for becoming offended or angry, but just for understanding. But I am afraid that even a reader who has been thus purposely prepared will be unable to withstand the irreverent conclu-

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<sup>16</sup>"My Life," II page 219, 220.

sion that he, the reader, seldom has had to contend with an author more subject to violent fits of megalomania.

The duck shooting is notable not, of course, because of the ducks of which there are no general knowledge whether they suffered any damage, but after the hunt, in hastening to satisfy the curiosity of the chauffeur who was "burning with impatience to know what they had bagged" (how the small is ever intertwined with the great!) Trotsky ran through the quagmire in his felt boots, got his feet wet, and caught cold. "The doctors forbade my leaving my bed. Thus I lay the rest of autumn and winter. That means that I lingered on throughout the 1923 discussion against 'Trotskyism.' One may foresee a revolution or a war, but it is impossible to foresee the consequences of autumnal duck-shooting." (A reader well supplied with exclamation points can use here as many as are needed, mine have given out.—M. P.)

"Lenin was lying in Gorkye, I in the Kremlin. The epigoni were widening the circle of their conspiracy."

Out of all the small groups that had stood out at the St. Paul High School, we are now confronted with the "tattle-tales and grudge-bearers," their victims and the "shilly-shallying, vacillating mass" embodied in the Party of a million members that was being strangled by the triumvirate. There is a dearth of "frank, hardy lads." This is not just. We must needs correct this oversight and tell what the "hardy lads" were doing.

While Trotsky was shooting ducks, the Party went through an exceptionally grave period. The period of restoration was at its very inception—disputes were raging as to whether we would reach the "pre-war level" in 1930 or in 1933. Anyone who would think of asserting that by 1930 we would be surpassing that level, would ignominiously perish in his Communist conceit. The masses of the workers, assured that they were suffering only because of the Civil War and the blockade, did not accustom themselves all at once to the idea that the pre-war wage levels would return only with the pre-war production level—and hence they grumbled. Before that very "shooting" quite a number of strikes had taken place. On such soil anti-Party agitation blossomed forth in full bloom. Two apparently serious underground organizations had just been exposed. Bogdanov's "Workers' Pravda" (Truth) where there were neither workers nor truth, but there was an appreciable number of Party intellectuals of youthful age; and the "Workers' Group," where, according to rumor, there were several thousand workers.

One should have seen with what sparkling eyes one of the "hardy lads" delivered himself of all this to me, proposing that I sign the document that had obviously initiated the campaign against the C. C. "An anti-Party organization of three thousand workers!" How could one let such a godsend slip through one's fingers?

I was aware that the situation was an extremely difficult one, but I refused to sign the document; it was quite clear that so far as the Party was concerned, the campaign against the C. C. would only render its position more difficult; whereas, on the contrary, it was not at all clear what advantage would accrue by replacing Lenin's old staff by "frank and hardy lads."

But the latter did not confine themselves to collecting signatures. They appealed to the masses besides. Their success among the masses of workers was somewhat below middling. But the young Communist intelligentsia, that

had swallowed Bogdanov's Pravda whole, also swallowed this. At the very beginning of the discussion the F. O. N. (Faculty of General Sciences) nucleus with its thousand members almost unanimously passed a resolution directed against the C. C. of the Party.

How does *My Life* react to all this? In no wise, to be sure. Trotsky had such a high temperature that they did not even show him all these declarations and resolutions. To this day he does not know, but everybody knew back in the autumn of 1923, that that year the Trotskyist faction made an attempt to overthrow the Party leadership and came relatively nearer succeeding in this than in any other of its attempts, although it was very far from absolute success. (It did not even get half the votes of one Moscow conference). If Trotsky had known this he would most likely have appeared at the meetings immediately and personally at least two or three times despite his temperature; Dzerzhinsky spoke under the threat of fatal consequences to himself. Afterwards, at Alma-Ata ("where insidious malaria, leprosy and black death shared in the reins"), he escaped unpunished such happenings as staying out hunting *for nine days and nights at a stretch* without getting under cover, in a frost of eight to ten degrees." But the "hardy lads" took good care of their leader, exceptional care, and poor Trotsky does not know to this very day—what back in 1923 a million Party members, strangled by the "Triumvirate" knew (plus no less than probably two million non-Party members).

Alas, for those "hardy, frank lads!" It's a shame. . . .

Naturally, Trotsky, not knowing this most important fact was laboring under the most phantastic impressions as to the reasons for what happened further to him. Imagine a man who knows nothing about the October Revolution suddenly alighting upon the Soviet regime and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. What would he understand? The same here. All these woes befell Trotsky because he and the "lads" that acted in his name were undermining that self-same Proletarian Dictatorship. But Trotsky knew nothing about this. It seemed to him that they began baiting him: (1) because he abstained from taking liquor, (2) because of his theory of the permanent revolution. Yes, that is true. I am not joking. It is thus written in *My Life*.

1. "Going visiting one another, exemplary attendance at the ballet, collective drinking bouts and picking flaws of those absent, could not attract me. The new higher-ups felt that I was not cut to this pattern of life. They no longer even attempted to draw me into it. For the same reason many groups would cease to converse when I appeared and the members separated in some confusion and with some enmity towards me. This, you see, meant that I had begun losing power, if you will."<sup>17</sup>

2. This thoroughly philistine, ignorant and plainly foolish baiting of the theory of permanent revolution had its origin in just these psychological sources. While gossiping over his bottle or on returning from the ballet, one self-complacent official would say to another self-complacent official: 'He has nothing but the permanent revolution on his mind,' meaning me. Closely bound up with this are the accusations of aloofness, individualism and aristocratism. 'Not all and not always for the revolution, one must also be for one's self'—this sentiment was translated into 'down with the permanent revolution!' Their protest against the theoretical exigencies of Marxism and the political exigencies of the revolution would with these people gradually

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<sup>17</sup>"My Life," Page 245.

take on the form of the struggle against 'Trotskyism.' Under this flag proceeded the liberation of the middle-class citizen within the Bolshevik. Herein lies my loss of power and this is what determined the forms within which the loss occurred."<sup>18</sup>

We have seen sufficient examples of Trotsky's "Marxism." As for the permanent revolution, when Lenin, in 1914, called it "spasmodically leftist," was that said "over a bottle," or at least "while returning from the ballet"?

In 1923 and the following years, there took place not the liberation of the middle-class citizen within the Bolshevik, but the liberation of the Bolshevik Party from the middle-class citizenry. Trotsky did not lose and could not have lost power, for the simple reason that he neither had nor could have any power over the Bolsheviks, inasmuch as our Party is not a hereditary monarchy and did not entrust any individual person with power *over it*. The Party has trusted men—as one of these trusted men Trotsky enjoyed great influence. Having lost its confidence, his influence was likewise gone. On trying to regain it by illegal means, he first landed in Alma-Ata and afterwards in Constantinople. The reasons for this catastrophe must be sought among the reasons for the Party's loss of confidence in him. How did this happen? *My Life* explains this quite satisfactorily independently of the author's wishes. Our Party is a proletarian Party—no middle-class individualist can stand at its head in so far as his middle-class individualism has not been consumed in the fire of the proletarian revolution.

For his middle-class individualism crops up in every line of his "autobiography" written in 1929, twelve years after the Revolution. Even such a sociological explanation, if you permit me to say so, requires no mention of a specific instance. Can anyone enjoy the confidence of the *Party* who does not merit the confidence of a private individual, when you cannot depend upon a single word of his? Trotsky himself answered this in those lines of *My Life* which I have quoted as my epigraph.

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<sup>18</sup>"*My Life*," Page 246.





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